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ABSTRACT

This monograph targets what is known about counseling outcomes in various counseling specialities while also providing a comprehensive overview of counseling outcomes research. The individual chapters were selected to focus on what leads to counselor efficacy, defined as the effectiveness of the counselor in bringing about counselor- and/or client-desired outcomes relating to the client. Each chapter includes a thorough review of the relevant literature and offers a summary of generalizations to be drawn from the area reviewed, as well as personal insights as to the implications of the review for counseling education, programs, and practices. Following a preface by Harold H. Hackney, the following chapters are included: (1) "Counselor Efficacy" (Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer); (2) "Career Development" (Rich Feller); (3) "Counselor Education" (Robert L. Gibson); (4) "School Counseling" (Nancy S. Perry); (5) "Student Development in Higher Education" (Cynthia S. Johnson); (6) "Marriage and Family Counseling" (Jon Carlson); (7) "A Review of the Counseling Outcome Research" (Tom Sexton); (8) "Important Considerations in Disseminating Counseling Outcomes Research" (Garry R. Walz); and (9) "A Summing Up" (Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer). A description of the Educational Resources Information Center/Counseling and Personnel Services Clearinghouse (ERIC/CAPS) and an annotated list of ERIC/CAPS publications are appended. (NB)

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Counselor Efficacy

Assessing and Using Counseling Outcomes Research

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Jeanne C. Bleuer

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**With a Preface by Harold H. Hackney,
Past President of ACES**

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Contents

Contributors v

Preface vii
Harold H. Hackney

1 **Counselor Efficacy** 1
Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer

2 **Career Development** 5
Rich Feller

3 **Counselor Education** 23
Robert L. Gibson

4 **School Counseling** 37
Nancy S. Perry

5 **Student Development in Higher Education** 51
Cynthia S. Johnson

6 **Marriage and Family Counseling** 63
Jon Carlson

7 **A Review of the Counseling Outcome Research** 79
Tom Sexton

8 Important Considerations in Disseminating Counseling Outcomes Research 121
Jeanne C. Bleuer and Garry R. Walz

9 A Summing Up 137
Garry R. Walz

Appendices

A ERIC/CAPS 143
B CAPS Publications Descriptions 145

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Preface

In our yearly meeting with ERIC/CAPS, Garry Walz broached the idea with me of ACES and ERIC/CAPS jointly sponsoring a program on counseling efficacy at the ACA National Convention. I enthusiastically concurred. ACES has examined and assiduously utilized the counseling outcomes research in the preparation of counselors in the past and certainly should continue to do so in the future. Both our public support and our effectiveness as a profession depend upon our ability to utilize the results of outcome research in the preparation of counselors. The program was well attended and enthusiastically received. Clearly, this initiative hit a responsive chord with counselor educators. As adjudged by those in attendance, interest in counseling outcomes research extends to those who practice counseling as well.

This monograph serves a real need in counselor education. It targets what is known about counseling outcomes in the different counseling specialities as well as providing a comprehensive overview. A frequently neglected but highly important topic—the dissemination and utilization of research results—has wisely been included. In short, it offers a "jump start" for counselors on what counseling outcomes research says about our counseling effectiveness and our personal efficacy as counselors. Equally important, it reveals both the strengths and the gaps in our counseling research. For both new and experienced researchers it can well be a useful source for helping to identify future emphases in counseling research.

I heartily recommend this monograph to all who are now counselors or who are in the process of becoming counselors. It will be of considerable benefit in providing useful information and in fostering professional renewal.

Harold Hackney
President, ACES, 1991-1992

Chapter 1

Counselor Efficacy

Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer

This monograph has experienced a protracted gestation. The cause for the extended period of development has little to do with any difficulty in the writing. On the contrary, the various contributors have been eager and excited about what they were writing and provided quality manuscripts on time. The reasons for the extended delay are more akin to the metaphor of a house builder who when he sees what a beautiful edifice is being constructed begins to add numerous additions and changes to the original plan to make it even more attractive. Anyone who has built her/his own house, or for that matter worked on a ground-breaking publication, will recognize the compelling need that arises to add "just one more section." We have at last conquered that feeling and believe that we have included all (or almost all) that needs to be in this monograph.

Two things were of most importance in our decision about what to include. First, we wanted to focus on what leads to counselor efficacy. For us "counselor efficacy" is defined as the effectiveness of the counselor in bringing about counselor- and/or client-desired outcomes relating to the client. Clearly the most important outcomes are those desired by the client. However, there are outcomes which counselors have in mind which they believe are important even though they have little apparent value to the client, e.g., that the client has undertaken a thorough career exploration before arriving at a definitive career choice.

With this definition in mind, we are focusing on the counselor and how he/she perceives counseling and the nature of their counseling interventions. We believe any counseling process is mediated by the person who uses it, hence, we need to give emphasis to the constellation of ideas and practices characteristic of a counselor (or group of counselors) and the extent to which they can be described as efficacious in their behavior as counselors. To speak to this definition requires that we extrapolate beyond the counseling efficacy research results, most of which relate to outcomes of the counseling interview.

It is probably accurate to say that for a large number—if not the majority—of counselors, their impact on clients (students) is a function of their relationships with them both in and out of the counseling interview. We would suggest that many of the functions identified as being important to achieving counseling outcomes in the interview are also of utility in counselor/client interactions that occur outside of the interview. The situation in which a counselor functions may severely restrict the number of formal counseling sessions he/she may have while offering many opportunities for "counseling on the hoof" or other counseling interview derivatives. In situations such as school, career, crisis, or abuse counseling the informal counseling contacts may have precedence over the formal contact. In fact, in at least one area—school counseling—the advent of the rapid acceptance of the comprehensive K-12 school counseling program model will prioritize counselor adaptability in achieving relevant counseling client outcomes through a variety of counselor interventions not usually described as counseling interviews.

A second major influence is a belief that efficacy is a dynamic entity, not a static "you have it or you don't have it" one. Essential to a counselor's efficacy is her/his capability for professional renewal. The vast changes occurring in our society require that a counselor be aware of these changes and the impact they can have upon different sub-groups and individuals. Knowledgeability and versatility are key ingredients for the renewing counselor. He/she needs a first-hand knowledge of new research results as well as a high degree of flexibility in knowing when and how to apply the new knowledge.

Key to the professional renewing process is a counselor who has a personal commitment to renewal and change as well as a systematic plan for insuring that she/he has access to relevant new ideas and resources. Put another way, efficacious counselors are always at risk of "losing it" unless they have a plan that provides for acquiring and using the knowledge vital to being helpful to clients who are themselves experiencing an array of unpredictable challenges to an orderly and rewarding life. A colleague of ours who returned to a school guidance program after an absence of 20 years was greeted with the comment, "You will be pleased to find that things are just as you left them." It is interesting to speculate about how many counselors are doing things "...just as they did" when they left graduate school or after their first few years of counseling experience.

Much as we believe that career decision making is appropriately viewed as the outcome of a systematic process of career exploration and self assessment, so too is it important for counselors to have a plan in mind for assessing their own growth needs and how they will acquire the new knowledge and skills essential to their performance as competent professional counselors. We have observed that, lacking a systematic plan for professional renewal, counselors may be unduly susceptible to the ploys of skillful marketers who offer quick "catch-up" workshops and self-study programs that promise the needed skills and knowledge in short order. Clearly professional renewal is not something that can be acquired in a few easy lessons. Efficacious counselors are ones who have given thought to what they desire to do as counselors and have a plan in mind for how they can use a wide variety of resources to accomplish their goals.

With our objective of advancing the concept of counselor efficacy, we offer here five papers written by knowledgeable and experienced professional counselors who have reviewed the counseling outcomes literature in five important areas:

Career Development—Rich Feller
Marriage and Family Counseling—Jon Carlson
College Student Services and Development—Cynthia Johnson
School Counseling—Nancy Perry
Counselor Education—Robert Gibson

Each of the authors reviewed the literature relating to counseling outcomes and counseling efficacy and summarized what she/he believes are important generalizations to be drawn regarding the outcomes of counseling in the area being reviewed. They also offer their personal insights as to the implications growing out of their reviews for counselor education and counseling programs and practices. We find it interesting to note the varying degrees of optimism reflected by the authors. It also is apparent that the amount of counseling outcomes research varies considerably by topic and area. Even in areas where there is a history of outcome research, one may adjudge there to be less than one had expected or hoped for.

In Chapter 6, Tom Sexton provides a comprehensive review of counseling outcomes research. He offers a number of trenchant generalizations regarding what can be said about the efficacy of counseling. He also suggests important implications of the research for counselor education and supervision. When combined with the ideas and conclusions presented in the five "counseling area reviews" the reader will find much to ponder and be stimulated by.

Chapter 7 probes the dissemination process—the means by which we put information into a counselor's hands. A plea is made for regarding dissemination as an interactive process between researcher and user with mutual prioritizing of goals and reporting of outcomes. Ten specific suggestions are also made for enhancing the quality and utility of the dissemination of counseling outcomes research.

The final chapter synthesizes and summarizes the results previously presented in the monograph. The chapter concludes with a series of knowledge generalizations based on the counseling outcomes research. A number of these generalizations have a futuristic bent to them suggesting what can and should be done to maximize the quality and utilization of our counseling outcomes research, now and in the future.

In this monograph there is no presumption, either explicit or implicit, that it contains the last word on counseling outcomes. More appropriately, it is intended as a stimulus for more and improved counseling outcomes research. And especially it is a strong voice for greater attention to how we communicate research results to counselors. Unless we can present counselors with information in a way that facilitates the adoption of new ideas, counseling may be fixated on "...the way it was 20 or more years ago."

Chapter 2

Career Development

A Baseline of Career Counseling Outcomes Research

Rich Feller

Introduction

Few practitioners or researchers question the effectiveness of career counseling or related career interventions in the broad sense. Yet the quality and comprehensiveness of the research deserves greater scrutiny in light of the field's broad scope and lack of consensus about outcome measures. Herr and Cramer's (1992) interpretation of research results in career education, guidance, and counseling in the aggregate are quite positive, and there is "no longer a major question about the ability of career guidance or career counseling to improve or change career behavior" (p. 682).

Does career counseling make a difference and are career interventions an answer to an expanding number of contemporary problems? If so, why are many career centers filled with excellent resources but few clients? Why does a Gallup/NCDA (1987) poll illustrate the need for expansion of career information, programs, and career interventions? Why do policy makers, state departments, educational institutions and third-party payers hesitate to increase support for career counseling programs and interventions? While Fretz (1981), Oliver (1979), Osipow (1982) and others have examined issues related to career counseling outcomes, this paper offers a baseline about the status of career counseling outcome research. From this, practitioners may ask better questions about their practices while appreciating the need for quality program evaluation. Researchers and counselor educators may gain greater focus in framing research questions as they add to the literature, often devoid of the answers sought by clients and policymakers.

By focusing attention on career counseling, it may become a more potent answer to questions related to individual choices, the work world, and economic well being. Following the approach of the ACES and ERIC/ CAPS initiative, this paper incorporates:

- a brief description of career counseling outcomes with reference to where career interventions are provided;
- a succinct analysis of the quantity and quality of career counseling outcome research;
- a discussion of major significant research findings;
- identification of notable trends or developments in career outcomes research;
- needed areas of focus for future research;
- implications for counselor education and counseling practice; and
- an assessment of the relationship among outcome research, counselor education, and career counseling practice.

Career Counseling Anticipates a Large Reunion

Delivery of career counseling has traditionally been perceived as a "test and tell" process for a small percentage of the population who could afford it or were connected to some educational institution. Presently, career counseling needs are provided within schools, work sites, community-based organizations and private practices. Individual counseling, group counseling, career guidance classes, life-work planning workshops, self-directed instruction, and computer and video technology processes are common forms of intervention. Political and economic factors shape the content and purposes of career counseling, therefore, differences in who receives and provides which services within which settings are great.

Through the early 1980s much of the effort related to vocational behavior found psychologists devoted to the measurement of interests, and the analysis of career patterns and development rather than assessing the effects of practice. Interest in practicing career counseling among counseling psychologists seemed limited and the clinical literature related to career counseling dormant (Spokane, 1991).

Yet career technicians joined career development specialists, educational counselors and an expanding number of human resource specialists in delivering programs within schools, community-based organizations, government, and private industry. The mushrooming force of paraprofessional career facilitators on campuses, within JTPA programs, agencies such as the U.S. Postal Service, and union halls document an expanded interest in career counseling for diversified populations. While for some, it is heresy to mention the value of services provided by outplacement specialists and a much maligned group referred to as headhunters or "flesh peddlers," there is a growing cadre of career counselors in private practice with and without a license. Clearly, there is an expanded base from which career counseling outcomes are provided.

Career education and life span development professionals have long suggested that the outcomes of career interventions merited more attention, research and status in the helping professions hierarchy. Comprehensive guidance and counseling models promoted program evaluation and career development competency attainment. Career guidance, historically available for only some adolescents, gained greater appeal to learners of all ages. Skill, learning system and regional economic mismatches called for career competencies for all over the life span (Feller, 1991). *Career Counseling: An Old Friend in Need* (Dorn & Schroer, 1983) suggested career counseling needed to return to its rightful stature in the counseling profession. National studies (Chapman & Katz, 1981, 1982, 1983; NCDA,1988; NOICC, 1988); professional certification efforts promoting Nationally Certified Career Counselors (NCCC's); and standards such as ACSCI's for CID's, and NCDA's for career information reaffirmed the need for quality interventions as career counseling embraced increased demand, respectability and accountability.

From Career Theory to Practice and Outcomes

A succinct analysis of the quantity and quality of research in career counseling inevitably is limited by the disciplinary lens with which one views the literature. While discreet definitions (Spokane, in press; Rounds & Tinsley, 1984) between career "pure" counseling and career interventions have been made, one must acknowledge the considerable overlap between many of the outcomes of career counseling and an expanding array of career interventions.

There are at least three major outcomes of career counseling—making a choice, acquiring decision making skills, and enhancing general adjustment (Crites, 1981). Herein lies much of the interest in outcomes research. When and under what circumstances should the focus be on one outcome rather than another? How does one isolate and fully describe the treatment variable? Observation suggests that counselors help clients process information related to each of the three outcomes through various approaches. This is done through traditional one-to-one career counseling as well as through interventions ranging from psychoeducational groups, to computer assisted career guidance, to bibliotherapy.

Research on career interventions is a relatively new phenomenon (Rounds & Tinsley, 1984) with little specific research conducted on career counseling in its pure form (Dorn, 1990). While Samler (1953) and Thompson (1960) earlier wrote about career counseling, research has focused on empirical studies of career theory rather than on counseling process or outcome (Spokane, 1991). Early studies on career counseling generated an impression that the inclusion of a career concern was more for the purpose of examining a specific social influence principle rather then for the purpose of examining career counseling (Dorn, 1990).

Hundreds of career interventions have been introduced to effect change in vocational behavior. Many are reviewed in the annual literature reviews of career development appearing in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* and the *Career Development Quarterly*. However, Rounds and Tinsley (1984) suggest that these reviews, along with other reviews of the career intervention literature (Baker & Popowicz, 1983; Fretz,1981; Holland, Magoon, & Spokane, 1981; Krumboltz, Becker-Haven, & Burnett, 1979; Lunneborg, 1983; Myers, 1971, 1986; Spokane & Oliver, 1983; Osipow, 1982, 1987; Pickering & Vacc, 1984; Rounds & Tinsley, 1984; Super & Hall, 1978; Watts & Kidd, 1978) rarely address how specific interventions affect measured outcomes, or base their interventions on a systematic classification of vocational problems.

While most career counseling research is dominated by the study of career theory, use of assessment tools, and product and program evaluation, career counseling practice is not primarily research based. Developmental psychology's theoretical and empirical advances in the last three decades (Jepsen, 1990) resists translation into what career counselors can readily apply in their work. However, career intervention practices noted within recent works (Burck & Reardon, 1984; Crites, 1981; Gysbers & Moore, 1987; Healy, 1982; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Raskin, 1987; Spokane, 1991; Walsh & Osipow, 1990; Yost & Corbishley, 1987; Zunker, 1986) offer career counseling practices useful to meeting client goals.

The majority of quasi-experimental research has involved populations of college students lacking no-treatment control groups or agreement in operational definitions of outcome measures. There are few studies of the comparative effect of different career interventions on specific outcomes. Thus, the difficult task of grouping observations from which generalizations can be made is compounded. Few case and group case studies, qualitative or new forms of naturalistic inquiry are reported. The practicing career counselor measuring group outcomes is of little value unless he/she speaks specifically to client goals. For example, as R. Reardon and J. Sampson (personal communication, 2/15/92) advise, if half the clients want to expand occupations and half want to limit options, the Self Directed Search may show no effect because it typically expands options. In summary, there are numerous problems with the quality and quantity of outcomes research in career counseling as practitioners are driven to improve practices.

What Do the Major Research Findings Tell Us?

Career choice and development theories generated impressive amounts of empirical data and influence on research and counseling practice over the last 40 years. Osipow's (1990) theory convergence suggests a relatively common base of concepts upon which to improve practice which supports Savickas' (1989) notion that "we need to determine which interventions work with whom and under what circumstances" (p. 107). Fortunately, such documentation has the potential of directing future policy, assisting in procuring funding and shaping professional training.

Myers's (1971) examination of vocational intervention literature concluded that "one thing the studies of counseling outcomes provide to the practitioner is an array of treatment procedures of tentatively established worth" (p. 886). Fretz's (1981) review of career intervention effectiveness supported Takai and Holland's (1979) view that the evaluation literature of career interventions suggests that myriad, diverse interventions lead to small detectable gains despite differences in methods, format, personnel and costs.

In *Career Intervention*, Spokane (1991) suggests that evaluation of career interventions provides information needed to assess the effect of stated intervention goals and objectives. His distillation of literature reviews (1991, pp. 213–214) offers a very thoughtful and helpful set of observations. In abridged form they include:

1. The results of nearly 100 controlled empirical studies with a variety of clients using a full range of career interventions demonstrates moderate but robust beneficial outcomes.
2. Longer (at least ten sessions), more comprehensive interventions have roughly twice the beneficial effects of briefer interventions.
3. Long-term effects of career interventions have been demonstrated for up to 6 months after treatment with little loss of potency.
4. Individual counseling is the most efficient intervention in terms of amount of gain per hour of effort.
5. Inventories and self-assessment devices are still the most sought-after and effective intervention strategies with computer-assisted interpretations enhancing their effects with written information and media presentations.
6. Job-seeking, self-presentation skills can be effectively learned using role plays, role models, and group discussions.
7. One can expect an average of one standard deviation of gain following a career intervention on measures of career maturity, decisional status, appropriateness of choice, and information-seeking behavior.
8. On the average, clients will seriously consider one additional career option following a career intervention.

9. Teaching cognitively-oriented decision strategies to intuitive deciders is the only intervention found to produce consistently ineffective and/or harmful outcomes.
10. Low self-esteem and social skills individuals, with high indecision and low vocational identity, or those with unrealistic aspirations will have better outcomes in individual counseling than in self-guided or group interventions.
11. Minority and special groups will have better outcomes with more structured as opposed to more vague and diffuse career interventions.

Crites (1987) in reviewing evaluations of career guidance program and intervention studies (Campbell, 1968; Myers, 1971; Oliver, 1979; Fretz, 1981; Holland, Magoon, & Spokane, 1981; Spokane & Oliver, 1983; Campbell, Cornell, Boyle, & Bhaerman, 1983; and Hotchkiss & Dorsten, 1985) reinforced the importance of systematic activities which engage all students in career guidance interventions.

Within *Foundations for Policy in Guidance and Counseling* (Herr & Pinson, 1982), Herr overviews two decades of empirical studies that address the effectiveness of guidance, counseling, psychotherapy and related processes in changing certain types of behavior. He found that many interventions had been combined into programs of career education and career guidance and that studies of cost benefit analysis in psychotherapy do have significance for guidance and counseling as reference points for outcomes likely to be true for career counseling.

In the midst of a decade of school reform efforts, Drier (1989) argued that career development interventions had become a key instrument in developing achieving students, satisfied citizens and a productive workforce. His review highlights the work of Campbell, Connel, Boyle and Bhaerman (1983), Bishop (1985), Suk and Bishop (1985), Hollenback and Smith, (1985), and Mertens, Seitz, and Cox (1982). Bhaerman (1977), Herr (1978), and Hoyt (1980) found that career education in various forms delivered positive career outcomes. Through meta-analysis of 18 evaluation studies of career education Baker and Popowicz (1983) found moderate positive outcomes from career education treatments.

Spokane and Oliver's (1983) and Oliver and Spokane's (1988) meta-analyses, recognized as two of the best syntheses of the career counseling literature, indicate clear differences in effectiveness among intervention modes. The most important influence was "treatment intensity," defined as the number of hours and sessions of treatment received. Their findings recommended more attention to design and analysis issues, systematic attention to the development of a complete set of outcome measures and complete reporting of study details for purposes of replication, meta-analysis and actual use in practice.

Clearly, more professional counselors and non-credentialed career facilitators are providing career interventions. While some provide services with limited insight into the effects of their efforts or little knowledge of recommendations from significant research findings, most career counselors hold interest and hope for improving their practices.

Which Questions Drive Research Trends or Is It the Other Way Around?

Readers interested in research trends are directed to annual research reviews appearing within the *Career Development Quarterly* and the *Journal of Vocational Behavior.* Authors analyze selected articles and identify trends which invariably include use of broader psychological processes and life span issues to explain career choice and transition. New perspectives on career counseling as a mental health intervention and changing demographics increasingly illuminate career problems unique to special populations. Assessment tools and computer-based interventions along with issues dear to the family, at-risk populations, and vocational adjustment also influence what gets researched. Unfortunately, research related to these areas can be reports of basic science research without practical applications or potential implications for counseling practice (Savickas, 1989). Numerous questions generated from practice or driven by state or national goals often fail to be reported or even researched.

Fortunately, a notable trend in outcome research that will bring research closer to career counseling practice is the expansion of scientist-practitioner teams. A team approach to inquiry holds the potential for framing questions closer and more responsive to the immediate needs of clients and public debate about education, work force quality, and self-efficacy.

Future Questions

Before suggesting which direction the focus of research might take, let me reflect on two items. A conversation (M. Savickas, personal communication, 1/30/92) emphasized that many productive researchers whose work appears in journals have little influence on practice or policy. Might researchers soon commit to the issue of usefulness in their studies and find more reward in disseminating useable knowledge rather than simply "getting published"? Secondly, Herr's (1982) research agenda for guidance and counseling still offers considerable direction to any career counseling effect questions or outcome research proposed in the future. The following is offered as one such speculation:

1. What behavioral changes are required by which populations, under what assumptions? What educational, economic, social and labor market constraints limit the impact of career counseling?
2. What are the comparative effects of different career interventions on the same problems?
3. How are different career interventions and age, ability, special client group, race, gender, socioeconomic status related?
4. What are the longitudinal effects of specific career interventions?
5. What are the cost benefit effects of different interventions to the individual, the employer, and society?
6. What are the effects of interventions on organizational change and personal productivity?
7. What language can be agreed upon so career measures can be standardized or classified, studies compared, and results disseminated to a wider audience?

To complement such research it seems imperative (Osipow, 1982) that improvements would be enhanced through development of a career problem taxonomy, from which interventions could be designed and outcomes selected. Answering these questions is not simple, as the context within which career problems present themselves becomes more complex. Even though, a sophisticated and diverse array of intervention techniques is available to address these problems. As Spokane and Watts (1990) speculate "the next generation of career intervention research will probably be an exciting blend of group and single case data that builds on the substantial research base of nearly 100 years of research, theory and practice" (p. 121).

What's Expected of Counselor Education and Practice?

Pinkney and Jacobs (1985) suggest that counseling psychologists in training and counselor educators don't value career aspects of their role as highly as those dealing with personal counseling, depression, and psychotherapy. While there have been numerous calls for increased emphasis on career development in counselor education (Hohenshil, 1982; Hoyt, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1982; Reardon & Buck, 1980), reality suggests that career development remains a low priority. Often it is taught by junior or affiliate faculty within a stand alone course. As students understand career to mean more than job, and counselor educators understand career development as a lifelong philosophy with a set of competencies (NOICC, 1988) rather than a course in occupational information or guidance programming, its value increases. A commitment to teaching the skills needed to conduct career counseling outcomes research and evaluation studies can be enhanced, even as additional topics are called for within counselor education programs.

Career counseling within educational settings traditionally serve more affluent and younger clients with career choice problems. As changes in the workplace, family and economy create more career opportunities for adults, professional counselors in an expanding number of settings will note greater demand for counselor skills and interventions which enhance career adjustment. Practitioners committed to improved effectiveness and professional renewal will be eager to determine which interventions result in behavior change.

Until such a body of literature is available Spokane (1991) offers seven corrective steps to increase counselor and program effectiveness. In abridged form they include:

1. Intensifying the intervention through a longer period or different mix of strategies and techniques.
2. Reviewing the goals, objectives and outcome measures to see if they capture the essence of the intervention.
3. Reviewing the client's needs and problems.
4. Instituting treatment plans which include goals, assessment devices and recommendations for strategies and techniques.
5. Engaging a peer consultant to improve treatment potency.
6. Establishing an advisory board representative of the client population.

7. Contacting program dropouts, especially if dropout rate is more than 30%. (p. 224)

The present interests of counselor educators and practicing counselors may not be focused on career counseling or career intervention research. However, as increased demands for self knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning are presented to counselors-in-training, schools, agencies and private counselors, the merits of career interventions will increase as clients ask "is my time with the counselor making a difference?".

As counselors become trained in more than "test and tell" approaches to career counseling, clients can expect to see strategies that empower clients to incorporate processes helping them to monitor their career development (Healy, 1990). Expanding forms of career assistance, a proliferation of materials, and techniques provided by an expanded variety of career "facilitators" require an increased amount of interest in evaluation (Holland, Magoon, & Spokane, 1981). With so much change anticipated in personal and institutional needs, and so many tools available from which to choose, preservice counselor education and continuing education must accept the major responsibility for improving the status, quality, usefulness and dissemination of outcomes research in the future.

To Those Framing the Questions

During any study of outcomes research, behavior change attributed to specific variables must be considered cautiously. Deficits exist in both reporting and in the context of the methodology. When one considers the scope of differing populations, time perspectives and interventions, along with the dynamic context of labor market constraints and sociopolitical change, the complexity of providing career counseling based on research is amplified. While career counseling is an answer, we should remain modest and honest about what we know. Researchers and evaluators must be open to useful questions and committed to disseminating findings in a fashion friendly to the research community, practitioners, and policymakers. While practice will continue to improve as a result of career outcome research, career counselors are wise to recognize that some of the more critical questions about effectiveness are being framed by those outside our ranks. As a result, career counselors must delineate the overlap between psychotherapy and career counseling, clearly establish a knowledge base and standards of practice, share intervention methods, and define successful outcomes and interventions (Figler, 1984).

While the counselor education, vocational psychology and career counseling community continue to improve professional standards in career counseling, the age of accountability, consumer advocacy and growing economic instability requires answers to immediate problems and urgently-framed client questions.

As one scans the present status of counselors-in-training and notes that the majority of counseling students are middle class females, counselor educators need to be concerned about training enough counselors willing to practice and conduct research with an expanding number of diverse populations. Of equal importance is the realization that the existing research base in career counseling seems to have little impact on policy formation at local, state and national levels. Convincing arguments verifying the outcomes and effects of career interventions must be developed and disseminated to policymakers. Resources are needed to train a sufficient number of practitioners able to conduct the research needed to answer the questions that will be framed tomorrow. As career counseling is seen as the answer, may those asking the questions be convinced that effective career counseling needs to be available for all.

Providing a baseline of career counseling research outcomes and commentary to issues critical to counselor educators and practice is only a beginning. May this effort foster a commitment to the proposition of useful research questions, effectiveness studies, and dissemination efforts. A field as dynamic as career counseling cannot rely on what only a few know during a time when an increasing number of questions are being asked.

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Six Recommended Resources

Arthur, M., Hall, D., & Lawrence, B. (1989). *Handbook of career theory.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Though not speaking specifically to outcomes research, this is a critical document because its 25 chapters are written by people not known as "career people." Issues presented are about populations, settings and organizations from which future questions about effects and outcomes will be generated.

Herr, E., & Cramer, S. (1992). *Research and social issues in career guidance and counseling. Career guidance and counseling through the life span.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Within the fourth edition of this classic text is a comprehensive and extremely well-documented overview of the status of research in career guidance with sensitivity to research techniques and the enormity of possible questions that may be asked about content and career intervention application.

Oliver, L., & Spokane, A. (1988). Career-intervention outcome: What contributes to client gain? *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 35*(4), 447–462.

An extension of similar work in 1983, this "standard bearer" in terms of meta-analysis methods offers significant guidance to those seeking to integrate primary research studies.

Osipow, S., & Betz, N. (1991). Career counseling research. In C. E. Watkins, Jr. & L. J. Schneider (Eds.), *Research in counseling.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

A recent release with an excellent introduction to career counseling research with special attention to general designs of outcome research, measuring outcomes, intervention selection, and recommendations for further research.

Rounds, J., Jr., & Tinsley, H. (1984). Diagnosis and treatment of vocational problems. In S. Brown & R. Lent (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling psychology* (pp. 137-177). New York: Wiley.

A comprehensive and foundational look at career counseling outcomes with an emphasis on vocational problem classification systems and vocational outcome reviews.

Spokane, A. (1991). *Evaluating career interventions. Career interventions.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

With unique concern for the practitioner, this chapter succinctly and clearly combines an overview of outcome research with special attention to evaluating diverse interventions and multidimensional rating scales.

Chapter 3

Counselor Education

Robert L. Gibson

Introduction

As we enter the 1990s counselor education programs are being called upon to prepare counselors for an increasing variety of settings and to provide them with a wider breadth and depth of preparation as well. These changes have included the expansion of entry-level programs to 2-year, full-time academic programs plus 600-hour clinical internship experiences. Reflecting this broad view of offerings, Hollis and Wantz (1990) reported 44 new course additions made or anticipated over the period 1990-1991. Some courses (e.g., multicultural counseling, substance abuse, and marriage and family counseling) were added to 70 or more counselor education programs.

Certainly the profession has made significant progress over the past 30 years. We note that minimal preparation standards for entry into the profession have risen from the 32-hour master's degree, common in the early 1960s, to the 48-hours (minimum) currently specified by CACREP. Additionally, the profession has moved to further insure minimum competencies for entry into the profession by setting standards for the selection and preparation of counselors and by the recognition of those qualified through certification or licensure. Currently CACREP has accredited 72 counselor preparation programs. School counselor certification existed in all 50 states by 1970 and today 27 states provide legal recognition for counselors licensed through the National Board of Certified Counselors.

Of course, a hallmark of any profession is the degree to which it has enhanced and advanced that body of knowledge which constitutes the core learnings and skills of the discipline. It is through research activities that this advancement occurs. It is this topic, research, and its application to counselor education, that is the focus of this paper.

Research in our profession has been a topic of some controversy and concern over the years. Back in 1964 Hector noted that our professional literature was replete with alarm about the lack and limited nature of our published research. Later, Goldman (1978) in his introduction to Research Methods for Counselors, wrote:

> From 1969 to 1975 I was editor of the Personnel and Guidance Journal. I resolved from the beginning that we would publish only those articles that had something to say to counseling practitioners, that we were a reader's not a writer's journal. We found almost no research manuscripts during those years that satisfied that criterion; quite a few research reports were received, especially in the earlier years, but almost every one of them either was so technical that it could not be truly understood except by very research-sophisticated people, or was so limited in its implications that it really had nothing to offer the practicing counselor....I came to the realization that the problem was not "research" as a general idea but rather the kinds of research that have predominated in our field. I became convinced that the kinds of research methods and the kinds of research studies that prevail in the field are largely inappropriate or inadequate for most of the kinds of knowledge and insight counselors require in their daily work. (pp. 4–5)

Stockton and Hulse (1983) appropriately called attention to the fact that "Counseling is an applied discipline with an emphasis on practice; yet, if the profession does not assume responsibility for intellectual inquiry which might provide answers to basic questions concerning effective practice, the field cannot advance" (p. 303). In joining those calling for more "useable" research in our field, we would emphasize that research can (1) provide positive outcomes, (2) be carried out by even beginning practitioners within a simple framework of research procedures, and (3) be interesting.

It must be acknowledged that even today our profession does not project a strong research image. Contributing factors to this image may be:

- Much research seems to ignore the common problems and everyday needs of practitioners.
- Research reports are often written in a manner that limits their interpretation and hence their application by practitioners.
- Research activities and resulting research reports rarely "excite the imagination."
- The research monies made available by federal and state agencies are being increasingly cornered by private research and development corporations.
- Research is too time-consuming and has very few "rewards" for most practitioners.
- The conflict in values cited in Woolsey (1986) between the underlying assumptions of the traditional methods of research and theories of counseling.

Brown (1989) noting the relationship between ethical standards of the profession, professionalism, and empirically verified practices suggested that

> As counselors become accepted as professionals in society, it will be increasingly important for them to base their practice on accepted standards of care, including standards that have been derived from empirical data, if only to protect themselves from intrusive and expensive malpractice suits. And this principle will not just apply to private practitioners. School counselors and others working in public agencies are just as vulnerable to malpractice suits as are those working in private settings. (p. 269)

Having noted concerns regarding research in our profession, the Strategic Planning Committee of ACES recently designated as one of the association's strategic goals, "the promoting of scholarly inquiry for the advancement of the counseling profession." The attainment of this goal gives us cause to move rapidly to develop a research agenda for our association. As a prerequisite to developing a research direction, we must ascertain (1) where we have been, and (2) what is the empirical evidence that has influenced and provided the foundations for our professional actions.

Research in Counselor Education

Initially, this discussion will examine our research heritage from the standpoint of trainee admissions and influences on training, and will conclude by suggesting some data-based futures for consideration in counselor preparation.

Studies examining admissions criteria for counselor education programs have been popular over the past 30 years. No less than 26 research-oriented articles have appeared in the counselor education and supervision journals alone over this period of time, reporting studies investigating the predictive reliability of various admissions criteria.

Markert and Mouke (1990) reviewed much of this research in counselor education admissions published between 1955 and 1989. They noted examination of such criteria as academic aptitude as reflected in GPA or as assessed by exams such as the GRE, letters of recommendation, interpersonal characteristics, using various scales or personality measures and personal interviews. The findings of these studies suggested serious predictive validity for each of these criteria.

Markert and Mouke then proceeded to survey 32 counselor education programs to ascertain their current admissions criteria. The criteria reported most frequently were undergraduate GPA's (varying minimums) (25); GRE or MAT (18); personal statements (25); letters of recommendation (29); individual interviews (13); group interviews (8); prerequisite course work (18); and work experiences (16).

Another recent survey by Cristiani and Basile (1991) reported responses from 24 counselor preparation programs. They reported that the criteria most frequently utilized by their sample were letters of recommendation (23); GPA (22); GRE or MAT (22); goal statements (14); work experience (14); interviews (12); personal narratives (10); and interpersonal skills (9). They concluded that researchers have yet to provide much evidence that any of these criteria, singly or combined, effectively predict academic success or eventual counseling effectiveness. Nonetheless, many counselor education programs continue to apply admissions criteria that cannot be empirically validated to justify its utilization.

In addressing the topic of research influences on counselor education, we must readily acknowledge that all empirically-derived knowledge appropriate to our professional mission as counselors could be cited as research that has potential influence on how we educate those in our counselor preparation programs. I will happily admit that such a formidable and extensive task is not within the purview of this brief presentation. In addition, my colleagues in this publication have already addressed research in many of the major areas of counselor education. Thus, this discussion will focus on (1) who are the researchers frequently cited to our students, and (2) what research have counselor educators noted as influencing them as counselor educators.

In identifying those theoretician-researchers whose contributions are frequently cited to our students, 12 introductory textbooks were reviewed. It was assumed that textbooks which serve to introduce beginning students to the professional field of counseling would by their broader coverage be more discriminatory (in a sense) than the more narrowly focused specialized texts (i.e., career, group, assessment). The consistency with which the works of the individual theoretician/researcher were presented across all the texts reviewed with the number of citations were the two criteria used in identifying those most frequently cited. The major contributors are listed alphabetically in their categories (always cited, very frequently cited, and frequently cited) with their areas of contribution indicated in parenthesis.

Always cited

Rogers, C.	(Person-Centered Counseling)

Very frequently cited

Carkhoff, R. R.	(Helping Skills)
Corey, M. S.	(Group)
Ellis, A.	(Rational-Emotive Therapy)
Ivy, A. E.	(Micro-Counseling)
Krumboltz, J.	(Behavioral)
Super, D.	(Career Development)
Yalom, I. D.	(Group)

Frequently cited

Bandura, A.	(Social Learning Theory)
Berne, E.	(Trans)
Brammer, L.	(Helping Skills)
Cormier, L. S.	(Interviewing Skills)
Egan, S.	(Helping Skills)
Glosser, W.	(Reality Counseling Theory)

Holland, J.	(Career Decision Making)
Perles, F.	(Gestalt Therapy)
Williamson, E. G.	(Directive Counseling)

It is fair to say that most, if not all, counselor preparation programs cite Carl Rogers to their trainees and many will also draw upon the research of those very frequently or frequently cited.

A second approach was to more narrowly examine what specific research has influenced how counselor educators function. A brief open-ended questionnaire asking for this response was sent to a sample of counselor educators.

This sample, though small, seems to validate earlier unpublished studies by the author (unpublished because of lack of a common core of research). Twenty-four counselor educators reported a wide range of research studies that had influenced their practice. The individual researchers most frequently cited were Ivey for his microcounseling (four times); Carkhoff for his facilitative conditions studies (three times); and Holland for developing a vocational identification and classification system (two times). Several respondents mentioned studies focusing on client-counselor interactions and supervision variables, but did not identify any specific researchers by name. A number of other general areas of useful research information (twelve) were singularly noted, plus other researchers (six) who had made an impact on the counselor educators' reporting.

At this point we can conclude that while research has failed to give us a single set of valid criteria for admissions, this may be more consistent with a counseling philosophy of each individual as a person of worth within his/her own uniqueness. On the other hand, despite criticisms cited earlier, our profession has drawn on both a common core of research data and a broad range of empirical studies to provide our knowledge base for much of our counselor education programs. Let me, therefore, turn to the more important task of examining our research future—a future including both tremendous opportunities as well as tremendous challenges.

Counselor Education Research: The Future

As we enter the 1990s and emerge into the next century counselor education has the opportunity to not only build on the progress of the profession in the recent decades, but to accelerate and give it direction. We may accomplish this through research studies that address our own professional issues and, equally important and largely ignored, studies that address our society's major social issues and the unique role we can play as trainers of counselors for the future. In this quest we are also responding to those within our ranks who are calling upon the counseling profession to become a more unique, viable and visible profession.

To succeed in this quest we should remind ourselves of those basic marketing principals (paraphrased) which suggest that:

- what we have to offer is needed
- our response to this need is unique (different from our competitors and better—more efficient and/or effective)
- we can offer evidence that what we offer leads to the results claimed.

This will not be easy. Conyne (1977) voiced a concern that we've been aware of over the years when he noted that:

> Counselor education and guidance counseling are rooted in adapting, applying, borrowing, and adjusting what has been offered in other professions—a situation stylistically similar to a person continually stripping, refinishing, and using old chairs found in garage sales. While the final products may be sound and attractive, their basic structure remains the same. Counselor education could easily be dubbed a "secondhand rose."
>
> This continual borrowing has led the profession to contribute little creative and original directions to the fields of education and human services. It is largely because of this situation that counselor educators and guidance counselors together are finding themselves in an increasingly precarious employment position. Controllers of the purse strings now ask about counselors with increased frequency, "What do they do?" "How can we know they are actually doing it?" and, "Are they even necessary, since we have a school psychologist/counseling psychologist/clinical psychologist/etc?" I submit that these are hard questions for us to answer adequately and that our difficulty arises in large part from

> the secondhand rose position in which the profession continues to place itself. (p. 310)

We do, however, have the opportunity to alter this image of an imitator and borrower. We can do this in the context of the previously cited marketing principles by a research initiative which:

- responds to social needs
- re-emphasizes our uniqueness as a helping profession (i.e., our emphasis on prevention and development as well as remediation; the only helping profession with a career development base; the only helping profession that consistently works with populations in their formative years)
- anticipating and preparing for the future—being proactive not just reactive
- involving our graduate students as active partners in meaningful research undertakings

An analysis of futures data collected and shared with the strategic planning committees for AACD and ACES pointed to some of these futures with the following implications for counselor preparation.

Future Projections and Implications for the Profession

Future: The Workplace

Rapid technological change will affect virtually every work setting. Coupled with the continued movement towards information production and away from goods and to a lesser extent service production, this will result in mismatches between needs and workers qualified to meet these needs. This rapid technological change will also necessitate multiple career changes for the majority of our work force in the coming decades. The average age of this work force will continue to go up as older workers keep working. This raises these questions:

- Will the older workers be willing to participate in the "life-long learning" needed to maintain a world class workplace?
- Will these older workers contribute to the difficulties young entry level workers are beginning to experience in finding jobs?

Complicating this economic projection is the prediction that unemployment/underemployment, especially with minorities, will continue to be a problem at this critical time. By the year 2000, one-third of our population will be "minority." This will amplify racism, which is already on the rise and threatening to be a major social problem by the turn of the century.

Implications/Opportunities for the Counseling Profession: The counseling profession has a historical interest in, and commitment to, career development. We are the only helping profession with expertise in this area. We should expand this expertise to become "economy smart" as well as "career smart." We should also be more active in working with and researching with business and industry, vocational and technical educators, and government to bring together youth, training, and jobs to find answers to problems of older workers and to develop a world class work force. We should be the centerpiece of any legislation focusing on these career issues. We *are not* to date!

Future: Schools

Learning will be influenced by a rapidly expanding information base requiring multi-media approaches transcending the printed word (i.e., electronic learning). New curricular emphasis will include new technological/vocational curriculums (similar to those already in place in Germany, Japan, Korea); renewed attention to the arts; focus on globalization and living and working with an international orientation, environmental conservation and the schools as centers for life-long learning. Also, a longer school day and school year may be part of the future in school systems in our country.

Schools will continue to be breeding grounds for major social problems, i.e., substance abuse; AIDS, and other sexuality problems; teen violence; racial tensions; economic and educational gaps between the "haves" and the "have nots." Nearly all children will be "latch key" throughout their school years. One result: More youth "gangs."

Implications/Opportunities for the Counseling Profession: Prevention, wellness and development must become major goals of school counseling programs, and major research agendas for our profession. Obviously, prevention and wellness courses must become a reality in our counselor education programs. Minority counselors are needed as both role models for minority youth and as multicultural awareness educators in every school. While certified minority counselors are preferable, this need is so critical that consideration of training minority para-professionals should not be overlooked if this is the only means of having minority adults in every school.

Further, we cannot continue to allow the bureaucrats, politicians, and others to ignore the role of mental health and student wellness in pupil attainment and their future citizenship. Counseling approaches should be applied to the classroom and the total educational environment. We must also anticipate that schools will have to assume more responsibility for underparented ("latch key") youth. School counselors must move now to prepare meaningful programs. We must be proactive! Program development courses must prepare counselors seeking employment in school settings to develop such components for their total school program.

Future: The Family

Dual career couples will be the norm by the turn of the century. Also, the work force will be more mobile. "Roots" will be more difficult to put down. Further, as the American work force becomes more stressed out and children have less parental contact, the probability of more stress on families is high.

Implications/Opportunities for the Counseling Profession: Marriage and family counseling must prepare for new dimensions as traditional family roles, patterns of living, responsibilities and relationships are altered. Again, researching these new variables will be vital.

Future: The Society

Society will continue to experience most of the major social problems already present at the beginning of this decade. As a result, crime and delinquency will continue to increase despite tough new laws and more jails with low income minority populations being both the most victimized and the most incarcerated. Gang violence can be a rapidly increasing problem unless appropriate preventative action is taken.

An increase in "people abuse" also seems probable in a more stressed out, less stable society. AIDS will affect epidemic numbers in the immediate years ahead and substance abuse will continue to be a major social concern.

Implications/Opportunities for the Counseling Profession: Again, the counseling profession must stress and enhance its prevention skills, and must underscore its capacity to work with populations (schools, work place, community, etc.). Counselors are "caregivers." Counselors should be activists for caring environments in all of society's basic institutions. Counselors must develop programs on human sexuality, values clarification and development, and ecological management.

Summary

Opportunities exist for both research and training to serve projected social needs of the next decade while at the same time advancing the profession to the pinnacle of all helping professions. Our counselor preparation programs must:

- strengthen our traditional career core
- require courses in multicultural counseling, prevention and wellness, human sexuality and research
- expand marriage and family offerings
- develop international internships

Finally, we need a national research agenda that involves all of counselor education, with all of our graduate students as junior partners, actively involved in meaningful empirical studies that will advance and validate our field of knowledge and establish our reputation as a profession in its own right.

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Chapter 4

School Counseling

Nancy S. Perry

Introduction

School counseling traces its roots back to the turn of the century when the Vocational Choice Movement was started by Frank Parsons in Boston. This was the beginning of "scientifically" directing students to specific occupations which seem to meet their individual interests, aptitudes and skills. When vocational guidance efforts slowed down in the 1920s, school guidance was refocused to address personal and social issues of students. The Mental Health Movement brought specialists into the schools who became involved in diagnosis and psychotherapeutic intervention. The advent of Sputnik in 1957 evoked a massive infusion of federal money to train high school guidance counselors in the identification and encouragement of capable students to enroll in college, especially in math and science programs. In the 1960s and 70s, school counseling became part of a constellation of student services which included school psychologists, social workers, and nurses. In the 1980s and 90s, the birth of the Developmental School Counseling Model changed the emphasis of school counseling from being an ancillary service to the concept of being a comprehensive program, based on developmental principles.

Developmental School Counseling Model

In the Developmental School Counseling Model, which is being promoted by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) as the preferred format, the positive aspects of the earlier approaches have been incorporated into a comprehensive program which includes group curricular experiences in which to develop life and career skills, individual advisement in educational and career decision-making, and counseling and consulting to ameliorate individual barriers to learning. This program approach is proactive, rather than reactive, and systematically reaches all students rather than just those who seek assistance or are referred. Comprehensive school counseling programs based on this model are considered an integral part of the educational program rather than an ancillary service. They are designed to prepare the whole student to live, learn, and work in the world of tomorrow.

Prevention and intervention are served equally in the comprehensive developmental model. Since it is logical to introduce preventative skills at the earliest opportunity, elementary school counseling has been growing rapidly as over one-fourth of our states have mandated school counseling programs at that level. Middle/junior high school counseling programs have also increased with the realization that career and pre-college guidance must begin before the high school years. Today, over 70,000 professional school counselors work in all levels of schools from pre-K to post-secondary.

The comprehensive, developmental model has gained much favor across the nation among educators. It is now time to assess its effectiveness. Counseling has had difficulty achieving the precision attainable in research in the physical sciences. Because of the intangible nature of many of the variables present in the counseling situation, problems of definition of terms, criteria selection, measurement, and control are formidable.

Research

Consequently, most of the research in counseling has relied on correlational strategies that can elucidate relationships among variables but cannot specify causality (Gelso, 1979). The effort to identify causal relationships has resulted in an increasing focus of research on very narrow topics that have little relevance to the day-to-day activities of counselors (Goldman, 1977). There has been research and documentation of various models of school counseling programs. These range from the effectiveness of small group interventions for children of divorce to the efficacy of school counselors based on their relationship to their principals. However, due to the newness of the comprehensive, developmental model, there have not been any longitudinal studies to validate the effectiveness of such an approach. Since many of the individual elements have been researched and found to be effective, one might hope that the combining of these strategies might produce a synergistic effect. However, until such studies have been conducted, one can only speculate on the validation of this approach.

Expected Outcomes. In order to consider the research needs, one must identify the outcomes expected as the result of a developmentally-based comprehensive counseling program. Generally, ten results have been identified as desirable outcomes (Sears, 1991). As a result of the counseling program, high school graduates will be able to:

- develop effective relationships with others
- apply their interests, skills, and aptitudes in the world of work
- use a decision-making process when making important decisions
- control and direct their feelings/emotions
- resolve conflicts peaceably at home, school, or work
- resist using alcohol and other drugs and engaging in other harmful forms of behavior
- manage stress
- utilize resources to set and reach educational goals
- achieve realistic career goals
- value life-long learning
- value traits/characteristics of people who are different

Although the first six outcomes might be considered appropriate for any counseling intervention, the last four are unique to the educational setting.

Effective School Counseling Programs. One of the principal tasks of the school counselor is to help each student utilize available resources to make informed educational decisions. This is usually accomplished through a combination of group guidance, in which information and sources of information are conveyed to the students, and individual advisement in which a student's aptitudes, interests, skills and aspirations are analyzed in order to make the best educational decisions. According to the National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) *Statement on Precollege Guidance and Counseling and the*

Role of the School Counselor (NACAC, 1990), "Of particular importance to student success is access to a strong precollege guidance and counseling program that begins early in the student's school career. Early planning (e.g., secondary school course selection and precollege enrichment programs) can insure that students pursue the most challenging curriculum that results in enhanced postsecondary educational options." The statement goes on to delineate the components of an effective precollege guidance and counseling program. Most of them would be considered generic to an effective school counseling program. They are:

- A written statement of philosophy that is consistent with the school's overall philosophy.
- A written comprehensive plan of action that outlines student needs and sets forth goals and objectives for meeting those needs.
- An evaluation process that measures progress toward meeting stated goals and objectives.
- A focus on precollege guidance and counseling that enables students to prepare themselves academically for a wide range of educational and career opportunities.
- Differentiated staffing that includes a sufficient number of counselors with counseling loads that enable them to accomplish program goals and objectives.
- Effective communication with a variety of constituencies, including students, parents, all educators, and the larger community.
- Counselors and other educators committed to the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.
- A supportive instructional and administrative staff who work cooperatively with counselors to assist students in achieving educational goals consistent with their aptitudes, abilities, and interests.
- An environment that recognizes each person's worth in a complex multicultural, changing society, one that supports and encourages each student to reach his/her potential.
- Respect for student privacy and the need for confidentiality of records.
- Delivery of services according to ethical practices.
- Assurances to students and parents that counseling professionals have been properly trained to carry out the precollege guidance and counseling responsibilities.

- Adequate facilities, resources, and equipment to accomplish the goals of the program.

These are the criteria against which any school counseling program should be evaluated. The same guidelines apply whether a student plans to continue his/her education or not. These criteria will utilize resources to set and reach educational and career goals, inculcate a desire for lifelong learning, and teach the valuing of diversity in all people. A comprehensive school counseling program, developmentally based, will also refine and develop life skills such as establishing effective relationships, becoming aware of one's feelings and emotions, learning methods of negotiation and conflict resolution, managing stress, and avoiding harmful behaviors. If these are the desired outcomes of school counseling programs, how should they be measured?

Program Evaluation and Counselor Evaluation. Research in school counseling may be divided into two elements— program evaluation and counselor evaluation. Program evaluation should include the measure of effectiveness of individual program components as well as the effectiveness of the program as a whole. This might be appraised by evaluating students' perceptions of their proficiency in achieving the 10 outcomes listed previously. Ideally, a comparison could be made between a group of students who have experienced a comprehensive developmental counseling program over a sufficient number of years and a control group who have not participated in such a program. At this point, such a longitudinal study has not been possible. The seeds have been planted, though, in such places as Des Moines, Iowa, where elementary counselors have been placed in all 41 elementary schools with a consistent ratio of 1:250. All schools are working toward a consistent approach using the comprehensive, developmental model.

These students will be followed as they progress through the school system, provided funding is continued. Until that time, the American School Counselor Association has attempted to help individual schools evaluate their programs by offering self-audits at all levels (ASCA, 1990). These audits are based on the assumption that there are broad professional principles of good practice, management, and conduct. The topics covered are (1) the philosophy, objectives, and policies of the guidance/counseling department; (2) the role and function of the guidance/counseling department in the school; (3) the role and function of the school counselor, including general role and function, personal counseling, career guidance and counseling, college and financial aid guidance and counseling, ancillary services, testing, working in a consulting capacity, referrals, accountability, and identifying trends and issues; (4) specialized populations in counseling; (5) professionalism and the school counselor; and (6) professionalism and the field. Many states such as Mississippi (Mississippi, 1987) and Florida (Florida, 1979) have developed manuals to assess counseling programs. Others have depended on the local establishment of standards and measurement such as that done in Eugene, Oregon (Hendrickson, 1982).

Action-oriented research of individual program components or activities has not been embraced by practicing school counselors despite encouragement and resources provided by ASCA. Such research is defined as being focused on immediate application, not on the development of theory or on general application. Its findings are to be evaluated in terms of local applicability, not universal validity. Its purpose is to improve school practices, and, at the same time, to improve those who try to improve the practices: to combine the research processes, habits of thinking, ability to work harmoniously with others and professional spirit.

ASCA has produced a professional development workshop entitled, "Developing Practical Action-Oriented Research for Demonstrating School Counselor Effectiveness and Accountability" (Allen, 1991) which has been given to all state school counselor associations for use in their states. Additionally, a booklet, "Desk Guide for School Counselor Research: Tips and Techniques" (Porter, 1991) was distributed to all state associations. Practicing school counselors were targeted as recipients for ASCA Research Grants but the resulting participation was very poor. One can only guess the reasons for the resistance of practicing school counselors to engaging in this method of accountability.

All school counselors should have experienced some kind of exposure to research in pre-service training. Although fear of statistics seems to be common to many counselors, there is some indication that counselors have little desire to upgrade the skills that would assist them in conducting research (Wilson, 1985). Sometimes there are also institutional barriers such as obtaining permission from parents or supervisors. Resistance from parents and administrators can be especially strong if the research design calls for some kind of control group that does not receive the services being evaluated.

The question of who does not receive the treatment is always difficult to resolve in public school research in which presumably every child is equally entitled to available resources. The most frequently given reason is lack of time (Vacc, 1981). However, nearly every school requires some type of program evaluation which, unfortunately, often takes the form of general reactions, testimonials, and other forms of self-report. ASCA has since enlisted the assistance of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) to encourage counselor educators to assist in action research in local schools as a pro bono service to the profession. The University of Southern Maine requires that counselor interns conduct some type of action research during their internship within schools. They have the technical assistance of their academic intern supervisors to help them in the design and interpretation of such projects. It also provides a model for the field counselor supervisor. It is hoped that such application will help to remove whatever stigma exists that keeps school counselors from using research methods in evaluating their programs. As Pine (1981) stated, "A single school counseling program is a research gold mine in terms of important questions, variety and richness of data, and numbers of potential researchers" (p. 498). Counselors who learn to conduct research will become valued members of their schools, capable of not only enhancing their own program but of making significant contributions to the entire educational community.

Counselors are also in the unique position of using educational research in advising students. However, they must be aware of the relationship between bias (racism and sexism) and past and present research (Campbell, 1986). The tests counselors use, the ways test results are interpreted, and counseling techniques are all based on educational research. Counselors are cautioned to remember that not all research is done well or accurately; societal attitudes about people of color and women influence research results; and news reports and research abstracts do not include enough information to enable one to evaluate the research. Bias may be more subtle now but a counselor must carefully analyze the conditions of the research and determine if the study results apply only to people who are similar to those studied or are overgeneralized to include others. Counselor preparation programs should emphasize the importance of interpreting research as well as objectivity in conducting accountability studies.

Research into counselor evaluation has produced a plethora of personal indicators of counselor effectiveness. No matter what the situation is, clear communication and support for the development of efficient, effective, and professional definitions of the counselor's role must be established between the counselor and his/her supervisor (Stickel, 1990). One of the greatest complaints of school counselors is that they are often evaluated with the same instrument that is used for teachers. This is due to the fact that performance appraisal is often linked to negotiations. The majority of school counselors operate within the teachers' contract and are a part of their bargaining unit. Therefore, evaluation is not differentiated. However, some school districts such as DeKalb County, Georgia have developed an instrument for collecting information from assistant principals, head counselors, teachers, and students (Tucker, 1988). Competency areas included: Relating to Others; Communication; Professionalism/Ethics; Planning and Implementation; and Demonstrating High Expectations. Although no single instrument can incorporate all job-related behaviors, this counselor evaluation instrument includes behaviors shared by most counselors.

The Houston, Texas, Counselor Quality Assurance Program Manual (McIntire, 1983) addresses the renewal and professional growth opportunities for school counselors. Assessment is achieved through a team process. The Johnson O'Connor Research Foundation (Foxley, 1982) administered aptitude tests to a sample of guidance counselors. The guidance counselor sample scored significantly higher than the general population in Ideaphoria (a measure of verbal fluency), Inductive Reasoning (quickness in seeing relationships) and Pitch Discrimination. The high Ideaphoria and Inductive Reasoning scores were expected because the counselor's job appears to use these aptitudes; the high scores on the music test, however, do not have a ready explanation.

One study reported a possible pitfall in the evaluation of school counselors (Montgomery, 1979). Counselors who support students' self-exploration may be evaluated less favorably than counselors who make decisions for the students. Two theoretical approaches to school counseling are the guidance of student personnel services approach and the counseling psychotherapeutic approach. If credibility data are collected according to the criteria of the guidance orientation, but counselors employ a psychotherapeutic approach, the results become meaningless. Yet these results are often used for decisions concerning the support for counseling. This study again emphasizes the need for clear communication in evaluating the school counselor.

The research needs for the future are those that will demonstrate the effectiveness of school counseling programs. If the comprehensive, developmental approach to school counseling programs is to be supported, longitudinal research must be conducted to assess its value. Until that time, we must rely on research of individual program activities, e.g., children's social skills (Elliott, 1987). The preparation for such a longitudinal study would require the development of consistent standards among such programs. The ratio of counselors to students will have to be considered because counselor availability has a significant impact on perceptions of counselor effectiveness (Boser, Poppen, & Thompson, 1988). Separate studies would probably have to be conducted to determine ideal ratios because the same program may require differing amounts of counselor attention according to the population served. The stated purpose of a comprehensive school counseling program is to serve all students. There will never be enough counselors to reach all students effectively through individual contact. Therefore, group work is emphasized as an effective methodology to achieve program goals. Research needs to validate the effectiveness of group work, both small group counseling and large group guidance. Finally, research needs to be conducted concerning the resistance of practicing school counselors to engage in research. At a time when the survival of the counseling profession in the public schools may depend on the ability of its members to demonstrate the effectiveness of their services, the majority of counselors do not engage in research or in evaluation activities. It has been suggested that this can happen only if the goals of the guidance program are restructured, altering the priority of counselors' tasks, and modifying the expectations of various groups within and outside the school (Wilson, 1985).

Counselor Educators and School Counseling. Counselor educators have a significant responsibility to the school counseling profession for conducting research in the schools. First, they have the motivation to conduct research themselves because of the publish or perish philosophy inherent in most universities. Longitudinal studies will have to be conducted by those who have access to students across the grade levels. This may be a central office supervisor or a counselor educator. Counselor educators also have a responsibility to assure that preservice counselors are well trained both in research methodology and practice. Counselor education programs must be examined to determine the reasons that practicing school counselors do not use their research knowledge after leaving the post-secondary setting.

Last, counselor educators must help practicing school counselors to use their knowledge and accessibility to students to provide the needed evaluation and research to improve programs. Pine (1981) proposed a solution he called collaborative action research, whereby university faculty and school counselors cooperate in seeking solutions to practical problems that arise in providing guidance and counseling services to students. In contrast to the usual situation in which researchers enter the school without the equal participation of counselors, research responsibilities are shared and counselors serve as co-authors of research reports. Such integration of research and practice draws on the university researcher's knowledge of methodological issues and procedures and the school counselor's familiarity with the issues to be investigated. Thus the strengths of both groups are used.

School Counselors' Role in Research. School counselors also have an important role in research and evaluation. In this day of accountability, it is the counseling outcomes of their programs that are on the line. They need to set evaluation as a priority that is essential to the system support. They must reach out for assistance, if necessary, and welcome strategies that may strengthen their programs.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that we all need to work together. Standards need to be set either locally or by states so that counselors, administrators, and the general public understand what school counseling programs are today. Counselor educators, in turn, need to teach to those standards. Counselors must be prepared to assume the role expected of them on the first day of practice. Counselor educators, state departments of education, and practicing school counselors must work in concert if we are to be credible as a profession. We are no longer trying to figure out who we are. We know. Now we must produce the research to convince the rest of the world that school counseling programs are vital in preparing our young people for their futures.

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Additional Recommended Resources

Allen, J. (1991, July). *Developing practical action-oriented research for demonstrating school counselor effectiveness and accountability.* Inservice Workshop Outline.

This is a step-by-step research guide for practicing school counselors.

American School Counselor Association. (1990). *Professional development guidelines for elementary school counselors: A self-audit.*

Professional development guidelines for middle/junior high school counselors: A self-audit.

Professional development guidelines for secondary school counselors: A self-audit.

These three audits provide a detailed self-study for school counseling program evaluation.

Pine, G. J. (1981). Collaborative action research in school counseling: The integration of research and practice. *Personnel and Guidance Journal, 59,* 495–501.

This article provides a model for research collaboration between counselor educators and practicing school counselors.

Porter, J. (1991). *Desk guide for school counselor research: Tips and techniques.*

This is a handy source for school counselors which demystifies research.

Wilson, N. S. (1985). School counselors and research: Obstacles and opportunities. *School Counselor.*

This article summarizes the positive and negative aspects of conducting research in public schools.

Chapter 5

Student Development in Higher Education

Cynthia S. Johnson

Background

The area of Student Services, or Student Development as it is currently called, is an important component of many counselor education programs across the country. From the first preparation program at Teachers College in 1913, the field has grown to over 100 graduate preparation programs producing over 1200 graduates per academic year at the master's and doctoral level.

The purpose of this article will be to provide a review of research as it relates to the important question of outcomes in Higher Education and in the profession.

The Student Affairs Profession

Student Development graduates perform multiple roles in 2- and 4-year colleges and universities. They counsel, advise, orient, and teach while working in Counseling Centers, Career Centers, Admission Offices, Residence Halls, Student Activities Offices, Orientation Programs, College Unions and any of over 30 out-of-class arenas on today's college campus. Their core curriculum includes counseling, management and administration of higher education, and student development theory. Their roles include that of counselor, administrator and student development educator.

The counselor role in this professional field varies. On the community college campus most counselors must have master's degrees, and their roles include that of adviser, career counselor, and personal counselor. On the 4-year campus most counseling centers are staffed by Ph.D. Counseling Psychologists from American Psychological Association (APA) approved programs. However, it is believed that all professionals in the field do some kind of counseling whether it is working with a student leader in academic difficulty, or with a residence hall "roommate" conflict.

Current Demand for Outcomes Research

The topic of outcomes is one that is of major interest in Higher Education today as a result of:

- the numerous reform reports critical of colleges and universities
- legislative and taxpayer concerns about the "value" of higher education, and the billions of dollars it costs
- new demands by accrediting bodies indicating a need for documenting student outcomes assessment

With fiscal "downsizing" or "rightsizing" occurring currently in higher education in over 23 states, questions are being raised about the necessity of counseling centers, career centers, and highly paid administrators on college campuses. As a result of these factors at least 11 states have mandated that assessment studies on the "value added" of a college education occur annually.

The net result is that Academe is no longer able to hide behind the "Ivory Tower" and explain what it does in broad, vague terms such as "producing the educated person." This trend has forced student affairs to articulate more clearly what it is about, and to adopt new research strategies that document the results of specific interventions in terms that Boards of Trustees, parents and legislators can understand.

Current State of Research in Student Development

George Keller, in an article in *Change Magazine* (1985), discussed the problems with research in Higher Education. He said that there is a preoccupation with research methods (referred to erroneously as methodology), a lack of research addressing the major problems of academe, and plentiful but scanty scholarship. He further stated that people responsible for decision making in higher education seldom read the research anyway.

Since the 1960s, the amount of research in the field of Student Affairs has increased significantly, as have the professional journals that publish such research. Research in the field has been summarized under five major topical areas (Kuh et al., 1986):

1. **Behavior**—achievement, admission/matriculation, alcohol/drugs, addiction, persistence/retention, academic dishonesty, sexual activity and preference, and student activities including participation in student government and other leadership functions
2. **Selected characteristics**—aptitude, vocational, and educational aspirations and interests, attitudes/perceptions and expectations, commuters, educationally disadvantaged, international, fraternity/sorority, graduate/professional, physically disabled, health/suicide, ethnic group (race, religion), socioeconomic status, transfer, veterans and women
3. **Student development**—career/vocational, cognitive/intellectual, moral/ethical, social/emotional
4. **Instruction**—developmental/remedial, compensatory/study skills
5. **Miscellaneous**—finances, learning styles/preferences, living environments, campus ecology/student-faculty interaction, students' rights/legal issues/discipline, and an "other" category

In a review of 1,189 articles published between 1969 and 1983 (Kuh et al., 1986) it was found that the research methods became more sophisticated over time with the majority of studies using multivariate techniques and being more theory-based.

Current problems with research in this field include:

- heavy reliance on psychological methodology to the exclusion of other fields of inquiry (anthropology-sociology, physics, etc.)
- small, narrowly focused studies that ignore broader issues
- too few studies that are replicable and generalizable

- lack of clearly measurable goals and priorities in the profession in general
- too few studies with respect to the diversity of today's college student populations
- too little evidence that Student Development theory really works
- insufficient agreement on what outcomes assessment means
- too few longitudinal studies
- insufficient funds from grants or external agencies to initiate meaningful large-scale studies of college students
- too few scholar/researchers being nurtured in the field
- and the corollary of the above—too many practitioners trying to juggle research agendas and the multiple daily demands of their work
- a lack of role models and rewards for the utilization of the research that does exists in the field
- evidence (Johnson & Steele, 1984) that research is not high on the agenda of some student affairs administrators

While numerous problems exist with research in this field much progress has been made in the past 2 decades. Theoretical foundations for the field now provide a basis for measuring maturity and growth over time in psycho-social, cognitive, and moral and ethical aspects of a student's life. Instrumentation has been developed that has helped the field be more precise in addressing the question of outcomes. More sophisticated questions are being asked, and there are more professional forums and publications that allow for the debate and exchange of ideas and information.

Major Research Findings in the Field

This brief article will not attempt to summarize the major findings in the overall field. Instead it will address two major trends in student affairs research: (1) developmental theories and diverse populations and, (2) outcomes assessment.

Student Development Theory

While Student Affairs was born at Harvard in the 1870s with the appointment of the first Dean, and developed a philosophy about the maturation of the whole student in 1937, it wasn't until the late 1960s that the field of student affairs adopted a theoretical base. Drawing heavily from other disciplines, psycho-social theorists such as Erikson (1959, 1963, 1968), and Chickering (1969), cognitive theorists such as Kholberg (1969) and Perry (1970), and other developmental theorists laid the groundwork for this field as professionals assisted college students in their maturation and growth.

While counselors, residence hall workers and other practitioners enthusiastically embraced this new theoretical orientation there were those that questioned the efficacy of the theoretical applications. Stamatakos (1987) called the adoption of these theories a "brass ring" embraced without systematic methodologies or thought given to the congruence of these theories with the professions philosophy. Bloland (1986) called student development a "new orthodoxy" adopted uncritically without waiting for research results suggesting that it worked.

What is currently new in the research area in this field is an increase in the evidence that some student development theory applications are having a direct impact on college student outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

In a review of published empirical research between 1973–1987 (Thrasher & Bloland, 1989) 27 research articles were analyzed. While the authors found the amount of empirical research on student development meager, evidence suggested that some programs and interventions had a positive effect on student growth. For example, in their summary they stated that "typically students who participated in developmentally designed courses advanced more on developmental scales then did other students enrolled in traditionally taught courses" (p. 553).

In reporting the work of Whiteley (1982) and Loxley and Whiteley (1986) students participating in the Sierra project, a residence hall program designed in part to increase levels of moral maturity, were found to "score significantly higher on the principled moral reasoning scale then did other students in a control group."

In terms of psycho-social development some programs yielded significant increases in the areas of autonomy and development of purpose through use of developmental interventions.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) produced further documentation about the research findings on the effectiveness of developmental theory in their book *How College Affects Students*.

While citing an impressive accumulation of evidence they also offer the following cautionary notes:

- the evidence has a bias because it focuses largely on non-minority students of traditional college age (18–22), attending 4-year institutions full time and living on campus.
- the samples vary from single-institution samples with only a few students to multi-institution, nationally representative samples with hundreds and often thousands of students

In view of this they question the generalizability of some of the findings. In spite of these words of caution, theoretically-based empirical studies and developmental theory interventions clearly produce results.

What is now needed is for these theories to be more thoroughly developed to provide additional information to professional preparation programs and to practitioners about the new majority on today's college campuses. Most of the theories that are currently being studied by graduate students were normed on a population that is now the minority.

For example, some gender studies show that women's cognitive, moral and psycho-social development differs from that of men. Women now comprise 53% of today's college students. Students over 25 will soon be the majority if they are not already. Yet most of the existing theories were normed on traditional-aged white, male student populations.

In California students of color are already the majority in the community college system. Do current theories generalize to non-white populations? Should research be done to compare and contrast existing theories with different populations? Or should existing theories be "deconstructed" and new ones formulated?

Clearly research on developmental theory outcomes will be a major agenda of the 1990s and beyond.

Outcomes Assessment

With an increasing segment of society asking what is the return on investment for a college education, counselors and counselor education programs need to develop more sophisticated methods of assessing outcomes. Problems, however, abound with the issue of research on assessment. There seems to be, for example, a lack of consensus on just what "assessment" means (Terenzini, 1989). Is it a series of surveys, a self-study, or a review of the curriculum and co-curriculum?

Further definitional issues exist when discussing assessment. What is its purpose? Is it for the enhancement of the learning environment or for accountability? What is to be assessed? Knowledge, skills outcomes, attitudes and values, or behavioral outcomes? Many student affairs programs and institutions of higher learning have unclear missions and goals and unclear technologies that make assessment and discussion of desired outcomes difficult if not impossible.

What is "value added"? Can value be added without positive change? And what do we mean by change? Are change and impact the same? Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) note that:

> Just as the presence of change does not necessarily indicate the impact of college, so too the absence of change does not necessarily indicate the absence of college impact. One important consequence of college attendance may be to fix development at a certain level and prevent reversion or regression. (p. 565)

Additionally, there are problems of organizational size and complexity, coordination, cost, methodology and measurement (Teranzini, 1989).

And finally Allen (1990) points out that most existing assessment instruments and methodology are based on a linear model of development and that development may occur through multiple pathways that are difficult to measure with existing methods. She suggests that we look into qualitative methods or Gleick's (1987) Chaos model which is being discussed and used in the field of science.

In spite of the above-mentioned problems, many states have mandated assessment and have effectively developed comprehensive assessment programs measuring outcomes in terms of student growth and development in the out-of-class life of a college student. These annually conducted assessment programs have served to improve campus programs and satisfy external stakeholders on questions of accountability.

In the State of Virginia student affairs administrators were active on the Governor's committee that mandated assessment and were able to influence its design. Most notable among the model programs on assessment are the ones at George Mason University and Longwood College in Virginia. On these campuses assessment has been integrated with the goals, priorities and budgeting for Student Affairs departments, and data being collected over time will assist decision makers and benefit students.

The assessment issue has forced Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to define more precisely what they are about and to provide evidence of accomplishment. It has shaped many of the campus research agendas and resulted in a number of national- and state-based instruments for the purpose of measurement.

Research Design Trends

Clearly the major trend in research design is the emphasis on qualitative research in this professional field. As stated in a recent Journal of College Student Development (Caple, 1991) "For too long doing research in student affairs, like many other fields, has largely been restricted to the use of one general design structure—quantitative methods. The qualitative method of thinking about and conducting research is an important and viable alternative" (p. 387).

What is necessary is for counselor education faculty to become more informed about the methodology of qualitative research, and for the profession itself to adopt more accepting attitudes toward naturalistic and qualitative methods of inquiry.

Fortunately, an increasing number of professional forums and publications are featuring programs and models for qualitative research that will help faculty and professionals alike become more adept with this research method.

While not all questions lend themselves to qualitatively designed research, Patton (1990) and Goetz and LeCompte (1984) consider qualitative methods to be superior to other research methods for certain situations, such as attempting to understand complex processes like change in college students. Many professionals in student affairs have concluded that qualitative research methods are especially appropriate for this field because they allow one to take an in-depth look at questions from the perspective of the student.

Attinasi (1992) believes that we cannot make progress in understanding college student outcomes unless we adequately understand what meaning college has for students themselves. His own research in this area, using in-depth, phenomenological interviewing as a qualitative research technique to look at Latino students, provides one such model for doing so.

Conclusion

With downsizing and diverse populations as the two major issues facing higher education today, the agenda is clear. More evidence of the outcomes of the counseling, advising and educational process must be provided using research methods that can assist the student in growing and becoming successful, and can provide more then the traditional "bean counting" data previously provided by some professionals.

Too little is known about many of the populations that are rapidly becoming the "New Majority" on our campuses. Much more research is needed on the ways Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans learn, grow, and make decisions. For example, is the independent, linear decision making model used in career development appropriate for these populations? Are we measuring new populations against Euro-centric models of traditional-aged white males and finding them different or less equal? What do we know about the counseling needs of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual student, and are we translating that knowledge to the graduate classroom? In areas where much progress has been made on the research agenda, for example adult development, are we integrating that knowledge in practice, or are we still teaching about more traditional populations?

Another future agenda would include developing a more global perspective for research. More studies that compare and contrast counseling, career counseling, decision making and issues of self-esteem across continents would inform practice and help prepare students for the international community in which they will work.

Finally, faculty must encourage graduate students to move beyond the narrow scope of their own research and publication agenda to ask generalizable "so what" questions that can benefit the profession and can be replicated.

All professionals need to be encouraged to use qualitative research methods. Only by looking at the many "big picture" issues facing today's new college student can we practice, become informed and enhance the important outcomes documented.

Additional Recommended Resources

Barr, M., & Upcraft, L. (1990). *The future of student affairs.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

An excellent overview of the many areas where research is needed by the profession.

Jacobim, A., & Ayala, F. (1987). *College student outocmes assessment.* Washington, DC: ASHE-ERIC.

The book discusses a variety of ways to approach this topic and documents why some of the approaches fail.

American College Personnel Association. (1991, September). *Journal of College Student Development* (Special Edition).

This edition is devoted to the topic of qualitative research and provides model studies for the practitioner and researcher alike.

NASPA Publications. (1992). *Puzzles and pieces in wonderland: The promise and practice of student affairs research.* Washington, DC: Author.

The most current review of the research literature to date.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

A monumental review of the research on outcomes over the past twenty years.

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Chapter 6

Marriage and Family Counseling

Jon Carlson

Introduction

More and more counselors and therapists are working from a systems perspective. Family and couples counseling/therapy is a treatment approach which views and treats the family as a system. The system has properties all its own: a set of rules, assigned and ascribed roles for its members, an organized power structure, intricate overt and covert forms of communication, and elaborate ways of negotiating and problem solving that permit various tasks to be performed effectively (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1991). Family counselors/therapists engage in the clinical practice of treating individuals, couples, or families. Regardless of the number of clients being treated, the family counselor conceptualizes problems in terms of the systems perspective. The family counselor therefore focuses on the context in which individuals exist and intervene on the relational level. Research support for family and couples work is indicated for a wide variety of situations. Proponents come from the ranks of medicine, social work, psychology, counseling, and the clergy.

The efficacy of marital and family therapy has been well supported by clinical research. Over the past 25 years there has been a steady increase in the amount of systematic, empirical study of marital and family therapy (Gurman, Kniskern, & Pinsof, 1986). A significant division, however, exists between researchers and clinicians. According to Gurman and Kniskern (1992):

> The clinician-researcher gap is not only in terms of the usual differences between these groups (e.g., nomothetic vs. idiographic richness and observational rigor vs. inferential richness) but also in terms of the most basic of epistemological premises. Thus, although some argue that traditional quantitative research methods are generally adequate to the task of studying complex systemic treatment phenomena, others (e.g., Tomm, 1983) argue that because causality cannot be established and "objectivity" is an illusion, the hypotheticodeductive methods of the physical sciences are inappropriate for the study of family therapy. (p. 67)

Research support and understanding of supervision and training in family counseling and therapy have also presented many challenges. The purpose of this paper is to review the major research results, trends, and developments, future research, and implications for counselors and counselor educators.

Analysis of Research

Researchers in couple and family therapy/counseling attempt to understand this complex therapeutic process. For the past 40 years research in psychotherapy has attempted to investigate the therapeutic process in order to develop more effective methods of treatment. Previous research tended to focus on the legitimacy of psychotherapy. According to VandenBos (1986) "by 1980 a consensus of sorts was reached that psychotherapy, as a generic treatment process, was demonstrably more effective than no treatment" (p. 111). According to Smith, Glass and Miller (1980):

1. Overall, psychotherapy is effective, with the average patient treated (*functioning*) better than 80% of those who need therapy, but remain untreated.
2. Well-controlled comparisons of different approaches to therapy yielded no reliable differences in effectiveness of behavioral and

> verbal therapies. Thus, there was little evidence of differential effectiveness among the different therapies.

Researchers have moved beyond the single-focus outcome studies and have turned their attention to comparative outcome studies, concentrating on the relative advantages and disadvantages of alternative treatment strategies for clients with different sets of problems. Explorations of process variables are taking place so that differential outcomes from various therapeutic techniques can be tentatively linked to the presence or absence of specific therapeutic processes. This shift is due in part to the economically-driven therapy marketplace with PPOs, HMOs, and DRGs demanding focused, brief, scientifically justified interventions. The day may not be far off when third party payers will reimburse only those treatments demonstrating efficacy.

The research-practice connection is weak in family counseling and therapy and must be strengthened (Liddle, 1991). Research touches every counselor supervisor, counselor educator, and trainee. Liddle believes that family counselors need to (1) decide how to use the basic research on the psychological, social, and physiological processes, and (2) use family counseling research in clinical practice. Research, however, has failed to play a very prominent role in the development of family counseling and therapy (Bednar, Burlingame, & Masters, 1988; Werry, 1989; Goldberg & David, 1991). Counselors do not seem to use research in their daily work and defend this behavior by claiming that: (a) questions addressed in research are irrelevant to clinical practice; (b) treatments, measures, populations, and variables investigated insufficiently represent actual clinical realities; (c) data analyses overemphasize group means and tell little about clinical significance or individual cases; and (d) journal articles on treatment research are written in a way and appear in forms that are inaccessible (Cohen, Sargent, & Sechrest, 1986; Hayes & Nelson, 1981; Morrow-Bradley & Elliot, 1986). Liddle (1991) feels that the attitude toward and values about research must be changed and isolates 10 key dimensions that will accomplish this change.

Major Research Findings

Gurman and Kniskern (1978) reviewed family therapy outcome and process research and drew the following conclusions:

1. Family treatment is more effective than no treatment. This is manifest in studies that contrast family and marital treatment to no-treatment control groups. The rate of improvement from marital and family treatment is about 66%, approximately the rate found in most therapy outcome studies of individual therapies.
2. While many patients benefit from family therapy, some patients (estimated at 5%-10%) worsen or suffer negative effects from family intervention. The deterioration rate is lower than that estimated for individual therapies.
3. There are a few areas in which some evidence suggests that family/marital therapy may be the preferred treatment intervention strategy. To say that in these instances family therapy is the *treatment of choice* may be putting the case too strongly, but comparative outcome studies favor family/marital treatment in the following situations: (a) marital treatment for marital problems/conflict; (b) conjoint sex therapy for sexual dysfunctions that involve the interaction context; (c) family therapy for the treatment of childhood acting out such as aggressiveness and adolescent juvenile delinquency. Other situations in which evidence indicates that the family/marital format is effective, but for which further comparative research is needed, include family treatment of asthma and anorexia, adult drug addiction, marital treatment when one spouse is depressed, and adjunctive treatment when an adolescent or young adult is schizophrenic.

In her review of the studies of effectiveness of marital and family therapy, Thomas (1992) cited research supporting marital/family treatment for:

- improvement of healthy functioning
- marital distress
- divorce
- childhood antisocial behaviors and conduct disorders
- childhood emotional and behavioral problems
- childhood tics
- anorexia and bulimia
- psychosomatic illnesses of children and adolescents
- school problems
- juvenile delinquency
- drug addiction
- alcoholism of spouse

- depression
- schizophrenia
- multiple personality disorder
- closed head injury
- sexual problems
- family conflict

4. While the various schools of family intervention (e.g., structural, strategic, behavioral, Adlerian) often claim or imply superiority, there is very little controlled research on the approaches while holding the format of treatment constant. This research would probably yield little differential information even if conducted. Rather, the field is going to manualization of therapies with precise specification of techniques, and when these are applied, often in usefully integrated mixtures, positive results are forthcoming.

As for the question of what treatment for what problem, Gurman and Kniskern (1981a, 1981b) and Gurman, Kniskern, and Pinsof (1986) offered some conclusions based on their literature search:

1. Conjoint treatment for marital discord is clearly the method of choice over the individual, collaborative (each spouse sees a different therapist), or concurrent (one therapist treats marital partners in separate sessions) approaches.
2. The beneficial effects of nonbehavioral and behavioral marital/family therapy often occur in treatment of less than 20 sessions.
3. Compared with no treatment, nonbehavioral marital/family therapies are effective in approximately two-thirds of all cases.
4. Behavioral marital therapy (BMT) is about as effective for minimally distressed couples as nonbehavioral methods, somewhat less so when severe dysfunction is involved.
5. Increasing a couple's communication skill, however achieved, is the essence of effective marital therapy.
6. Conjoint behaviorally-oriented sex therapy should be considered the treatment of choice for sexual problems, especially when severe nonsexual problems do not exist.

In their surveys, these reviewers found family therapy to be more effective than individual therapy, even for problems that seem more intrapsychic in nature than interpersonal. More specifically:

7. Structural family therapy appears to be particularly helpful for certain childhood and adolescent psychosomatic symptoms.
8. As for the relative efficacy of behavioral and nonbehavioral approaches, no conclusions are justifiable on the basis of published research. However, either strategy is clearly preferable to no treatment at all.
9. No empirical evidence yet exists for the superiority of cotherapy over single therapist interventions with couples or families.
10. Child management training, a behavioral technique, produces more favorable results with children engaged in antisocial behavior than do nonbehavioral techniques.

The data collected by Gurman and Kniskern (1981a, 1981b) also support the following:

11. Short-term and time-limited therapies appear to be at least as effective as treatment of longer duration. Moreover, most of the positive results of open-ended therapy were achieved in less than five months.
12. Several marital and family "enrichment" programs appear to have promise as useful strategies in family living (Giblin, 1986).
13. The more members of the family involved in the family therapy, the better the outcome seems to be. This is especially true when the child is the identified patient.
14. Therapist relationship skills have major impact on the outcome of marital and family treatment regardless of the "school" or orientation of the therapist. Training programs must focus on both conceptual-technical skills and relationship skills for beginning therapists.

Trends and Development in Research

Numerous research designs exist that will yield information about the effectiveness of a particular type of counseling. The APA Commission on Psychotherapies (1982) placed research designs on a continuum from lower level I types (e.g., one-shot case studies) through higher levels to level V types (e.g., multivariate designs) which are increasingly complex, reduce confounding of variables, and increase the level of knowledge obtained from the research effort. The following are criteria that apply to any psychotherapy outcome study:

1. Assignment to treatment condition by random assignment, matching, etc.
2. Measurement of the status of the client/family on foci of the intervention before and after treatment.
3. Matching of treatment and control groups on major independent variables such as therapists' experience and competence level, enthusiasm and belief in treatment they are administering, equal amounts of time in therapy, etc.
4. Assessment of clients not only at the end of treatment, but also at follow-up period (often 6 months, and/or 12 months) in order to assess the durability of treatment effects.
5. Description of the therapeutic techniques and strategies in sufficient detail (i.e., often some form of treatment manual) in order to teach therapists the techniques and to see if the treatment as described is being delivered.
6. Assessment instruments carefully selected in order to: assess individual and family change; assess those areas targeted by the two treatments as foci for change either as mediating or final results; judge change from the multiple perspectives of individual, couple, family, therapist, independent observer; assessment of both positive and negative outcomes.
7. Statistical analysis that would assess group differences with mean scores, percentage of clients/families clinically improved in both groups, etc.
8. Data on concurrent treatment. (Glick, Clarkin, & Kessler, 1987)

Future Research

Many researchers are calling for an end to "horse race" research (Jacobson, 1991) pitting different theoretical approaches against each other with the hope of discovering which one is best. The futility of this type of approach has been addressed by Maher (1988). There is "no established theory of psychotherapy that declared bankruptcy because of research that failed to confirm, disconfirmed, or falsified its theoretical propositions" (p. 694). Moreover, "it has probably never happened that the proponents of a theory of psychotherapy have spelled out the research grounds under which they would probably forswear their theory or renounce important theoretical propositions" (p. 695). However, Gurman (1991) made an interesting point when he indicated that methods of therapy need to have a reasonable degree of evidence of their efficacy in order to warrant further study. Once this has occurred, further intramodel studies can occupy the largest share of research efforts. This view has been challenged by Jacobson (1991) who has called for a push for discovery-oriented (vs. confirmatory) therapy research. (This is interesting in that Jacobson has been the pioneer in intramodal research.)

Moon, Dillon, and Sprenkle (1990) have advocated a qualitative research paradigm for family therapy, as they feel that this is congruent with systems theory. This model may also enrich process, discovery, feminist, and outcome research. Qualitative methods provide contextual data that can enrich the interpretation of quantitative outcome studies. For example, Jacobson, Schmaling, and Holtzworth-Munroe's (1987) 2-year follow-up of a component analysis of behavioral marital therapy (BMT) contained both a traditional, quantitative, before-after experimental study (Kerlinger, 1986) and a qualitative, structured interview study. The quantitative portion of the study revealed the differences between treatments which had emerged at the 6-month follow-up, disappeared by the 1-year follow-up, and did not reappear at the 2-year follow-up.

From the qualitative portion of the study the researchers were able to generate hypotheses as to why the treatment gains slipped away. These hypotheses, in turn, were used to develop an expanded version of BMT which included booster sessions to extend the effects of the initial treatment. Thus, hypotheses generated by the qualitative portion of an outcome research project helped BMT researchers interpret quantitative results and create a treatment modification that can be tested by future researchers. The work of Jacobson et al. (1987) clearly illustrated the complementarity of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms and the need for both types of research in some outcome studies.

Feminists dispute the appropriateness of quantitative methods of doing social science research. Thompson (1992) reviewed the feminist literature on both methods and contended that future research needs to be adapted and elaborated to serve feminist family studies. She also discussed two prevailing ethical concerns: Whose interests are served by research, and how the subjectivity and authority of research participants can be preserved.

Finally, Williams (1991) proposes a blueprint to close the gap between research and clinical practice. Williams believes that research should be more relevant and directed toward human needs. A model taken from private industry and based on a marketing and developmental perspective is proposed:

> *Stage 1.* Define consumers; develop an understanding of the consumer needs
> *Stage 2.* Generate new ideas
> *Stage 3.* Develop a workable concept that targets a consumer need
> *Stage 4.* Develop a prototype with a comparative advantage under limited conditions
> *Stage 5.* Develop a product with a comparative advantage under real conditions (p. 356)

As with each of the previous suggestions, it seems important to consider switching the focus of research to decrease the gap between research and clinical practice.

Implications for Counseling and Counselor Education

Kniskern and Gurman (1979) made the following startling assertion:

> We are unaware of empirical study of either process or outcome of training programs in the family field. There now exists no research evidence that training experiences in marital-family therapy in fact increase the effectiveness of clinicians. (p. 83)

These authors went on to decry the lack of data about other aspects of the training process. There is, for example, no evidence concerning: (a) the importance of prior training in family therapy for persons entering training programs, (b) criteria for selecting trainees, (c) preferability of training in one theoretical orientation versus many, or (d) the value of experiential methods such as personal therapy, role-play, and family-of-origin work for the trainee (Avis & Sprenkle, 1990, p. 241).

Nearly a decade later Kniskern and Gurman (1988) offered an update on their research recommendations. Their characterization of this area of the field became even more critical in the citation of a "remarkable empirical ignorance of what types of activity or styles of intervention should be fostered in trainees" (p. 372). Kniskern and Gurman discussed the irony in the fact that, although many of the field's pioneers worked in settings in which training was primary, the empirical evaluation of family-therapy training has only recently been appreciated as important enough to undertake. These authors recommended a five-step process of training program evaluation:

1. Identify and specify training goals
2. Develop the training model
3. Develop measures that evaluate training-induced change
4. Demonstrate the expected change in trainees
5. Demonstrate that trainees who have shown the expected changes on the measures are better able to help families than are those who did not have the training

Why has research on family therapy training developed so slowly when outcome research of family and couples work is mushrooming? The reasons for this delay probably lie in the difficulty inherent in this type of research. In one of the first empirical evaluations of a family therapy training program, Tucker and Pinsof (1984) identified the difficulties in evaluating family therapy training: (a) the complexity of the type of changes being measured; (b) the lack of a standard stimulus (families vary) against which to measure trainees' skills; (c) the lack of adequate and appropriate instruments for measuring change; and (d) the lack of reliable knowledge about which therapist skill or behavior is associated with positive family therapy outcomes.

Avis and Sprenkle (1990) found only 15 studies in their follow-up to Kniskern & Gurman (1979). From these studies the authors made the following conclusions:

1. We now have several instruments with some degree of validity and reliability which can distinguish between beginning and advanced therapists, to measure the acquisition of conceptual and/or intervention skills, and to offer feedback to therapists on their in-therapy behavior.
2. There is evidence that various forms of family therapy training can produce an increase in trainees' cognitive and intervention skills, although the latter is less certain because intervention skills have never been measured in actual therapy sessions.
3. Cognitive and intervention skills may develop independently of one another.
4. In-service family therapy training programs for agency and staff may be an effective way to increase agency service to families.
5. Beginning assessment skills may be as effectively taught using

traditional classroom methods as by using more expensive experiential methods.

6. Sequencing of training activities may be a significant variable in the acquisition of family therapy skills. (p. 260)

These authors questioned the adequacy of the research in terms of: sample size and random sample; control for trainee variables; use of control or comparison group; standardized training; follow-up; trainer variables; testing procedures used; and trainer-investigator nonequivalence.

Avis and Sprenkle (1990) recommend the following guidelines for future research in family counseling and therapy training:

1. There is a need for controlled research on both training and supervision.
2. More research should focus on replication of the better existing studies in order to confirm (or disconfirm) trends and tentative findings.
3. Develop more valid and reliable instruments with which to measure trainees' skills.
4. Pay more attention to evaluating training in terms of its impact on therapeutic outcome.
5. Various design improvements are necessary before the research on training may be considered methodologically adequate.
6. Comparative studies will be increasingly important for answering the specificity question—i.e., the question of what training is effective when, for whom, under what conditions, and for what kind of clinical situation.

Overall, evaluating the outcome of family therapy training is a fledgling research endeavor of tremendous importance to the field. As family therapy grows it is imperative to have training procedures based on a sound empirical foundation.

Implications for counseling and counselor education are:

1. Counselor educators need to train and instruct while utilizing methods and strategies that have empirical support rather than the traditional "seat-of-the-pants" style of training.
2. Counseling and counselor education need to become active in conducting outcome research. Although we can extrapolate from other related research bases, counseling is different and needs its own research. We need to know what is effective and why.

3. Consideration must be given to increasing "consumer driven" research.

Conclusion

Gurman (1991) indicated that the problems of research and research design may be only minor. "The major consideration, in my view, is that therapists simply do not choose (or switch to alternative) modes and methods of therapy (whether marital, individual, or whatever) on the basis of even rather convincing bodies of empirical evidence. We choose therapies because we identify with important teachers; we find some ways of thinking that are intellectually and/or aesthetically appealing (in ways we cannot always articulate); we find ourselves more comfortable with some ways of working and downright anxious or awkward with others, etc., etc. Even HMOs, PPOs, and DRGs will not amass enough power to overwhelm such personal proclivities" (p. 404).

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Additional Recommended Resources

Fincham, F. D., & Bradbury, T. N. (Eds.). (1990). *The psychology of marriage: Basic issues and applications*. New York: Guilford Press.

This book describes the basic and applied psychological research on the marital relationship as well as the issues, assumptions, and controversies that confront researchers and practitioners in the field.

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The two most useful references are the *Journal of Family Psychology* and the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. Both publish research reports and commentaries.

Chapter 7

A Review of the Counseling Outcome Research

Thomas Sexton

Introduction

The efficacy of counseling practices, procedures, and approaches is of particular interest to counseling professionals. In fact, throughout the history of the counseling profession there has been ongoing inquiry and debate regarding the efficacy of counseling (Highlen & Hill, 1984; Whiston & Sexton, 1993). Answering the questions regarding the most effective elements of counseling is a complex and perplexing task. Practicing counselors make numerous decisions regarding practices and procedures, each of which has an impact on the outcome of their work. The counselor educators who may train these practitioners are faced with similar decisions regarding which techniques to include in program curricula. However, what is the basis upon which these practice and training decisions are made?

The counseling outcome literature, one source of information regarding counseling efficacy, has had little impact on counseling practice and training. Cohen, Sargent, and Sechrest (1986) found the instrumental use of counseling research by psychologists to be an infrequent occurrence. In a national survey of counselor educators, Sexton and Whiston (1992a) found that while educators rated their knowledge of the outcome research as high, their understanding of this research was often inaccurate. Woolsey (1986) even suggested that even many counseling students are antagonistic towards research. Since counseling outcome research is designed to evaluate counseling and assess the factors that have the greatest impact on positive outcome, it is a potentially important source to which counseling practitioners, counselor educators, and counselors in training may turn in an attempt to understand the effectiveness of different interventions and theoretical perspectives. In addition, this research could be an important source from which to make the myriad of practice and training decisions facing counseling professionals. In fact, Lambert (1991) argued that without a thorough knowledge of outcome research a practitioner may not be able to serve in the client's best interest.

One explanation for the minimal impact of the empirical research on practice is that counseling effectiveness studies have been plagued with numerous methodological problems that often have made integration of this work into counseling practice difficult (Luborsky, 1987; Persons, 1991; Sexton & Whiston, 1991). The restraints of control required by traditional quantitative research designs have resulted in many studies conducted in laboratory or analog situations that tend to reduce the natural complexity of the counseling process and limit generalizability of the results (Kazdin, 1986). Similarly, the choice and adequacy of the measures of client change have been questioned in terms of what constitutes therapeutic change, how much change is meaningful, and from whose perspective change should be assessed (Highlen & Hill, 1984; Kazdin, 1986; Lambert & Bergin, 1983). In addition, for some practitioners the demands of daily work with clients leaves little time for consuming the multitude of research studies published in the wide spectrum of journals and books.

Recently, three important changes have made the counseling effectiveness research a fruitful and important area to which counseling practitioners and counselor educators may turn (Luborsky, 1987). First, a number of recent literature reviews have taken advantage of the 40-plus years of clinical research (Lambert, Shapiro, & Bergin, 1986; Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, Mintz, & Auerbach 1988; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). Thus, results can now be assessed across various studies in multiple settings. Second, the creation and sophistication of meta-analytic research approaches have provided a way to combine very different types of studies and methodologies so that trends across large numbers of investigations can be identified and specific effect sizes calculated (Kazdin, 1986; Smith, Glass, & Miller, 1980). In addition, box score tabulations that are the basis of qualitative research reviews result in a systematic summary of studies. Finally, there have been a number of recent, large-scale empirical studies that investigated the counseling process in clinically realistic settings and with methodologically sound procedures (Elkin et al., 1989; Luborsky et al., 1988; Quality Assurance Project, 1983).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an integrated summary of major research trends and common elements of the counseling process that contribute to successful client change. The primary goal is to synthesize those findings and clinical studies into a form that is applicable to both counseling practice and training, and discuss the implications of this work for both areas. The discussion will first review the counseling outcome literature concerning the most basic question: Does counseling work? If counseling works then what elements of the counseling process contribute to its success? In this regard, five components of the counseling process will be examined including: existing factors, the counseling relationship, session factors, specific models and techniques, and client experiences that occur within counseling.

Figure 1 is a graphical representation of proposed relationships among these components and client change that will be used to organize this review (Sexton & Whiston, 1991). The bidirectional arrows indicate that like Highlen and Hill (1984) and Strong and Claiborn (1982), these components of counseling are considered to be interactional and reciprocal. More comprehensive explanations of these elements are included in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Counseling Outcome

Initially the most important question is whether counseling is effective. Early studies of clinical effectiveness were based on non-systematic case study evidence and led to conclusions that lacked both reliability and validity (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992). These difficulties with the counseling research process no doubt fueled the concerns of many, including Eysenck (1952), who repeatedly claimed that there was little evidence for the effectiveness of counseling. He contended that counseling was not only ineffective but might even have a detrimental effect on clients who would have improved on their own.

The evidence accumulated over the last 40 years is relatively clear: Counseling is a process from which most clients who remain involved for at least a few sessions benefit. When counseling effectiveness is calculated by determining the number of clients who improved, the results are amazingly similar across various studies. On the basis of both client and counselor ratings, approximately 22% of clients made significant gains, 43% made moderate changes, while 27% made some improvement (Luborsky et al., 1988; Mintz, 1977; Rosenthal, 1983). In a major review of this literature, Lambert et al. (1986) suggested that on the average 65% of clients could be expected to make improvements while in counseling.

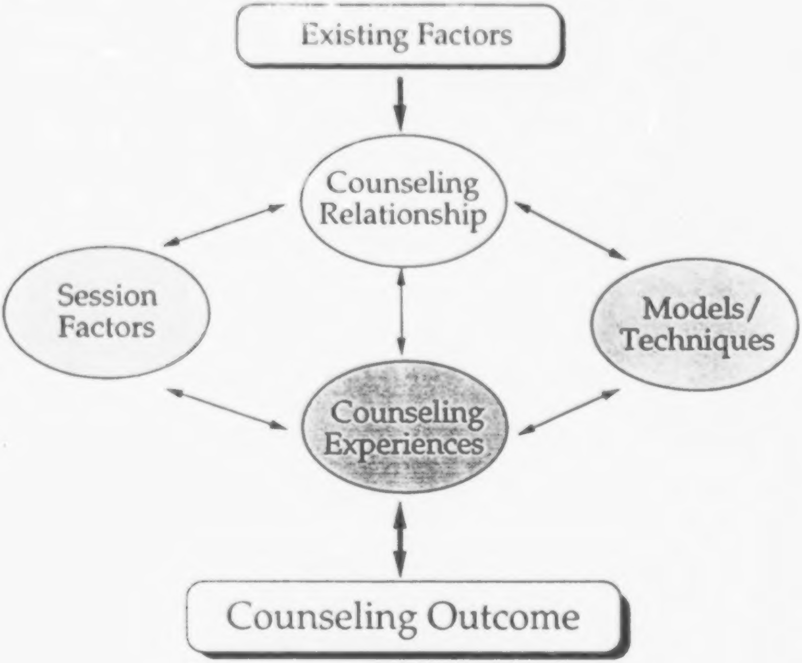
Existing Factors
Counseling Relationship
Session Factors
Models/ Techniques
Counseling Experiences
Counseling Outcome

Figure 1

Counseling efficacy is also apparent when the amount of client improvement is calculated. The first meta-analytic studies (Smith & Glass, 1977; Smith et al., 1980) found an average effect size of .85 standard deviation units over 475 studies. A number of subsequent researchers reanalyzed these data (Andrews & Harvey, 1981; Landman & Dawes, 1982) and reported average effect sizes from .72 to .90 respectively. Other researchers (Quality Assurance Project, 1983; Shapiro & Shapiro, 1982; Steinbrueck, Maxwell, & Howard, 1983) analyzed the effects of different samples of studies reporting average effect sizes ranging from .42 (Prioleau, Murdock, & Brody, 1983) to 1.22 (Dush, Hirt, & Schroeder, 1983).

In a recent clinical study, Luborsky et al. (1988) found psychoanalytic treatment to have similar effect sizes ranging from .69 with a measure of health symptoms to .80 based on a symptom checklist. Lambert et al. (1986) concluded that the average effect associated with psychological treatment is close to one standard deviation unit. On the basis of the standards developed by Cohen (1977) for understanding empirical findings in the behavioral sciences, the effect sizes due to counseling can be considered to be quite large.

While these results are compelling, two additional factors are also important to consider when judging whether counseling is effective. Effective counseling should help clients make improvements above and beyond those that would naturally have occurred without intervention (Garfield & Bergin, 1986). Bergin (1971), Lambert (1976), and Bergin and Lambert (1978) suggested that while some clients do improve on their own, in comparison, those in counseling improved more and at a faster rate. The reported gains produced by counseling also are greater than "placebo" improvement rates (Andrews & Harvey, 1981; Landman & Dawes, 1982; Quality Assurance Program, 1983; Smith et al., 1980). In addition, effective counseling should result in client change that is maintained over time. According to the outcome research, changes made by clients continued to be maintained at follow-up (Andrews & Harvey, 1981; Landman & Dawes, 1982; Nicholson & Berman, 1983; Smith et al., 1980).

Unfortunately, it is also relatively clear that some clients do get worse during their work with a counselor. The reported negative effects ranged from 6%–7% (Orlinsky & Howard, 1980) to 11.3% (Shapiro & Shapiro, 1982). Yalom and Lieberman (1971) suggested that these negative effects may not have been due to the counseling process itself, but instead were due to actions of certain counselors. According to

Lambert et al. (1986), counselors who let the client ramble and did not focus the counseling session, failed to identify important therapeutic issues, and/or failed to integrate these issues and themes into counseling contributed to negative client outcomes.

Summary: Counseling Outcome

These counseling outcome research findings are so compelling that the debate regarding whether counseling is effective is no longer a major issue (Lambert, 1991). Clients who remain involved for at least a few sessions experience significant improvements that are greater than those which could be attributed to either a placebo condition or improvement due to time. In addition, these changes appear to be maintained over time. While some clients get worse, it appears that this lack of improvement may not be the result of the counseling process per se, but instead may be due to actions of the counselor. Lambert et al. (1986) suggested that if the skillfulness of the counselor had been controlled in these outcome studies it is possible that the effects of counseling on client change could have been even greater. Thus, the more important questions now involve identifying which aspects, methods, and factors make significant contributions to the changes clients make in counseling.

Factors that Influence Counseling Outcomes

Given that counseling has the potential to help clients make improvements, it is important to consider the elements that may constitute the counseling process. Factors that influence counseling actually begin even before the first interaction between client and counselor. Both client and counselor enter counseling with certain characteristics that may affect the process and outcome of the counseling. Yet to be answered are the questions concerning the degree of influence that these existing factors have on the outcome of counseling.

Client Characteristics

In a review of over 25 years of clinical research, Frank (1974) claimed that among the most important determinants of long-term counseling improvement are client-related factors or characteristics. A variety of demographic characteristics have been the focus of empirical inquiries concerning these client factors. For example, both educational level and intelligence are positively associated with successful counseling outcome (Garfield, 1986; Luborsky et al., 1988). On the other hand, even though women are more likely to seek counseling (Collier, 1982), a client's gender is usually unrelated to outcome (Jones & Zoppel, 1982; Luborsky, Mintz, & Christoph, 1979). Interestingly, Carpenter and Range (1983) found that male clients are less likely than female clients to terminate once they have begun counseling. Finally, Luborsky et al.'s (1988) review also indicated that the majority of the studies did not find a relationship between age and counseling outcome, which is consistent with the results of Smith et al.'s (1980) meta-analysis.

Determining the relationship between a client's race and counseling is a somewhat more complex and controversial. On the one hand, Jones (1982) found counseling outcome to be unrelated to the race of the client. However, Garfield (1986) noted that race was correlated with socioeconomic level, and Casas (1984) contended that one cannot examine race without incorporating sociocultural characteristics such as socioeconomic status. There are some studies that indicated that minority clients had a tendency to terminate early from counseling more frequently than whites (Acosta, 1980; Sue, 1977; Vail, 1978). On the basis of more recent research, Abramowitz and Murray (1983) maintained that the empirical support for premature minority termination may not be as strong as previously believed.

While the issue of race alone may not be significant in counseling outcome, understanding the role of ethnicity is more complex. For example, studies on minority utilization of counseling services have further complicated the picture. Abramowitz and Murray (1983), Billings and Moos (1984), and Sattler (1977) suggested that minorities underutilized counseling, while Atkinson (1985) argued that the results of studies on use vary according to the sample and methodology employed. Atkinson (1985) further stressed that patterns seem to vary within ethnic groups, and general statements about minority use may be unwarranted. Neimeyer and Gonzales (1983) found that white clients were more satisfied with treatment than non-white clients. Reviewing archival studies, Atkinson (1985) concluded that when compared to white clients, ethnic minorities received not only different but less preferred forms of treatment (such as not being referred for individual counseling or being seen by a nonprofessional).

Besides demographic characteristics, there are additional psychological aspects of clients that are related to counseling outcome. Luborsky et al. (1988) found that the client's general level of emotional health was the best predictor of positive outcome. They also noted that this finding was consistent with other research that indicated that the severity of diagnosis was inversely related to positive outcome. However, Garfield (1986) claimed that adjustment and personality may not actually be predictive of outcome due to methodological problems because studies differed in how they defined and measured the constructs of adjustment and personality.

Some studies focused on the initial emotional state of the client. In general, the greater the level of initial client anxiety, the better the outcome (Kernberg et al., 1972; Lerner & Fiske, 1973). Luborsky et al. (1988) also found initial depression to be a positive predictor of outcome. It has, however, been difficult to empirically support the importance of client motivation due to the vagueness of the construct and lack of consistency in definitions across studies. Garfield (1986) contended that the empirical evidence concerning the relationship between motivation and positive outcome was not particularly convincing.

The relationship between clients' initial expectations of counseling and outcome also is not as clear as one might expect. Fester (1977) and Hardin, Subich, and Holvey (1988) found no difference regarding precounseling expectations of clients who prematurely terminated versus those who appropriately terminated counseling. In their reviews, Lick and Bootzin (1975) and Wilkins (1973) both maintained that the research on client expectations has been confusing and somewhat contradictory, and Garfield (1986) suggested that the importance of client expectations as predictors of outcome has yet to be determined. It seems that our understanding of client expectation is still at a beginning state since the majority of the research has been limited to the relationships between demographic variables and expectations (Craig & Hennessy, 1989).

Counselor Characteristics

Conclusions based on the decades of research into effective counselor characteristics remain, for the most part, equivocal (Beutler, Crago, & Arizmendi, 1986). For example, the relationship between counselor age and client outcome has little empirical support. Viewing counselor's age as a distinct variable, Beutler et al. (1986) concluded that there was only a weak age-outcome relationship. In a well-designed empirical study, Robiner and Storandt (1983) found that age similarity between the client and counselor did not necessarily improve the counseling relationship or the client's satisfaction with the counseling. These findings are consistent with Atkinson and Schein's (1986) review on the effect of age similarity and their conclusion that it does not account for client preferences for counselors or other measures of the counseling process.

Studies into the impact of counselor experience and training have produced surprising results. Stein and Lambert (1984) performed a meta-analysis and found that the experience level of the counselor had little influence on client outcome. Neither Auerbach and Johnson (1977) nor Smith et al. (1980) found experience to be an important influence on client outcome. However, Beutler et al. (1986) and Luborsky et al. (1988) contended that there is a general trend favoring more experienced counselors. Regarding the issue of professional training, Lambert and Bergin (1983) reported there is no evidence to suggest that an individual from one professional discipline is more effective than another. Unfortunately, studies into the variables of counselor experience and training have focused on simple correlations between the years of counseling practice and/or the type and level of professional training. The variable of experience may be better served by investigations into the skillfulness of the counselor.

The effect of the counselor's gender on outcome is more complicated than simple differences between male and female counselors. In their reviews, Maracek and Johnson (1980) and Tanney and Birk (1976) suggested there is neither a clear nor consistent trend in clients' preference for the gender of their counselors. Stricker and Shafran (1983) contended that an increasing number of studies indicated that clients prefer female counselors and stereotypical feminine characteristics in both male and female counselors. Kirshner, Genack, and Hauser's (1979) and Orlinsky and Howard's (1980) outcome studies found a trend favoring women counselors, but the experience level of the male counselor mediated that difference (i.e., as the male counselor's experience increased so did their effectiveness).

The impact of the counselor's race on the counseling process has received increased attention in recent years. Atkinson (1983) and Sattler (1977) found support for black clients preferring black counselors, but Atkinson (1983; 1985) found little support that other ethnic minorities prefer to be seen by ethnically similar counselors. Atkinson, Furlong, and Poston (1986) and Atkinson, Poston, Furlong, and Mercado (1989) found that Afro-, Asian-, Mexican-, and Caucasian-American subjects' preference for a racially similar counselor was less important than their preference for other counselor characteristics (e.g., attitudes and personality). Atkinson (1985) indicated that analogue and survey studies have generally failed to establish the existence of counselor prejudice and stereotyping of clients, but acknowledged that this result may be due to existing research strategies. The reviews of Abramowitz and Murray (1983), Atkinson (1985), and Atkinson and Schein (1986) suggested that the relationship between client-counselor racial matching to outcome remains unclear; however, after reviewing 20 years of outcome research, Luborsky et al. (1988) concluded that client-counselor racial matching is unrelated to outcome.

A great deal of the work regarding counselor characteristics has attempted to identify the ideal counselor personality. However, Beutler et al. (1986) maintained that it is unlikely that any single personality dimension or client-counselor personality match has a major effect on counseling outcome. Beutler (1981) summarized 18 outcome studies and found four studies that indicated client-counselor personality similarity was related to improvement, while five studies indicated dissimilarity was associated with improvement. Atkinson and Schein (1986) suggested that for some personality traits client-counselor similarity may have a positive impact; whereas, for other traits dissimilarity may function to improve compatibility. They also contended that some counselor personality traits (e.g., low dogmatism and high vigor) are desirable in counseling regardless of clients' personality traits.

Since counseling is largely an interpersonal activity, an understandable area of interest has been the impact of the counselor's mental health on outcome. A major difficulty with the research in this area is a lack of consistency in defining mental health. Lambert and Bergin (1983) indicated that although the evidence is mainly anecdotal, it continues to suggest that the counselor's personality integration and adjustment have a positive influence on outcome. A somewhat related question to counselor well-being is the impact of personal counseling for the counselor and subsequent therapeutic effectiveness. Greenberg and Staller (1981) cited two studies that found a positive relationship between personal counseling and outcome, four studies that indicated no difference, and two studies that suggested a negative effect.

Summary: Counselor Characteristics

It is certainly not surprising that there appear to be certain client characteristics that influence the outcome of counseling. Generally, the research supports a positive relationship between counseling outcome and amount of education, intelligence, and possibly the socioeconomic status of the client. Neither the gender nor the age of the client appears to be related to outcome. The relationship between client race and counseling outcome is complex. Although there are difficulties in measuring such variables as adjustment and personality, there are indications that emotional health and both greater initial depression and anxiety are valid predictors of a positive outcome. However, the evidence concerning counseling outcome and its relationship to both client motivation and client expectations is more equivocal than might be expected.

Although widely studied, research on existing counselor characteristics is often ambiguous with conflicting findings concerning the relationship between counseling outcome and variables such as the experience level, age, and gender of the counselor. Numerous reviews and research articles addressed the impact of counselor-client gender, race, or personality similarity on outcome. Presently these findings are unclear. Although the evidence is not usually empirical, there are indications that the counselor's mental health may be associated with positive results. Clients probably do not respond to single components of the counselor but rather to the whole individual, which may partially explain the inconclusive findings and suggest that more complex research designs may be necessary to explain the characteristics of an effective counselor.

These results concerning existing factors contain implications for both counseling practice and training. As can be seen, many of the "common sense" client and counselor characteristics, long thought to have an impact on counseling, are not significant factors in successful outcome. This research could serve as the basis from which practitioners could evaluate their beliefs regarding client characteristics. In addition, counselor educators could include in the curriculum courses on characteristics of clients and counselors that have been identified by data-based studies. Such courses would offer student counselors the opportunity to dispel their preconceived ideas.

The Counseling Relationship

The counseling relationship has long been acknowledged as an essential component of counseling even though there is little consensus concerning its definition (Gelso & Carter, 1985). In a systematic review of the counseling relationship literature, Sexton & Whiston (1992b) defined the relationship as those aspects of the client and counselor and their interaction that contribute to a therapeutic working environment which in turn may influence client change. Thus, the counseling relationship can be viewed as the interpersonal basis upon which technical aspects of the session and the implementation of counseling techniques are based.

The empirical literature has supported the claim that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is crucial to positive outcome (Luborsky et al., 1988; Marziali, Marmar, & Krupnick, 1981). According to Orlinsky and Howard (1986), there was a significant relationship between the quality of the therapeutic relationship and positive client outcome in up to 80% of the studies they reviewed. In a comprehensive review of the last 20 years of outcome research, Luborsky et al. (1988) reported that 88% of the studies reviewed identified a positive relationship to be significantly related to client outcome. However, given the vague definition of the relationship, questions regarding which specific elements of the relationship are related to successful outcome remain.

Early studies in this area often focused on the importance of the "necessary and sufficient conditions" as suggested by Rogers (1957). Luborsky et al. (1988) found that the more the counselor conveys empathy the greater the likelihood of positive client outcome. In reviews of the literature, Mitchell, Bozarth, and Kraft (1977) and Patterson (1984) also found support for the effectiveness of the counselor offering genuineness, warmth and empathy. The effect of counselor empathy on outcome seems particularly strong when measured from the client's perspective (Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Martin & Sterne, 1976). Additionally, positive regard and warmth toward the client both were related to better outcome (Feitel, 1968).

However, most comprehensive reviews have not found support for the importance of all aspects of Rogers' conditions, especially when compared to other aspects of the therapeutic relationship. Counselor genuineness or congruence had only an occasional, but not consistently positive, relationship with successful outcome (Lambert et al., 1986). Some findings concerning specific variables varied depending on whether they were measured from the client's perspective, the counselor's perspective, or from an independent observer's viewpoint. Congruence, which was found to be more strongly related to outcome when measured from the client's point of view, was still not as important as counselor credibility or engagement in the relationship (Garfield & Bergin, 1971; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). Counselor engagement in the relationship (Friedlander, 1981; Jones & Zoppel, 1982) and counselor credibility as measured from the client's perspective (Beutler, Johnson, Neville, Elkins, & Jobe, 1975; Ryan & Gizynski, 1971) were highly related to positive outcome.

Certain client characteristics also have an impact on the counseling relationship. Client involvement in the process and client openness in the relationship with the counselor were both shown to be significantly related to positive outcome (Kolb, Beutler, Davis, Crago, & Shanfield, 1985; Lorr & McNair, 1964). In addition, the client's level of warmth and acceptance of the counselor have been found to be significant factors (Bent, Putman, Kiesler, & Nowicki, 1976; Rosenbaum, Friedlander, & Kaplan, 1956).

There is growing evidence that the reciprocal and interactive quality of the therapeutic relationship may be fundamental in understanding the ingredients that comprise the therapeutic relationship. The importance of reciprocal empathy and affirmation were supported by an overwhelming 80% of the findings reviewed by Orlinsky and Howard (1986). The interactive nature of the relationship also is supported by the findings that suggest those counselor variables (e.g., empathy, positive regard) were most influential when measured from the client's perspective as opposed to global and objective measures (Garfield & Bergin, 1986; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). From an outcome research perspective, an effective therapeutic relationship is associated with role investment by both client and counselor, mutual affirmation, empathic understanding and personal contact, and a strong sense of affiliation and respect (Orlinsky & Howard, 1986).

Given these findings, there has been an increasing interest in models of counseling that consider a broad and more interactive perspective of the therapeutic relationship. In particular, two of these approaches, the therapeutic or working alliance (Bordin, 1979; Stiles et al., 1986) and the social influence model (Strong, 1968; Strong & Claiborn, 1982), seem to have great promise in helping clarify the nature of a therapeutic counseling relationship.

According to Bordin (1979), the counseling relationship is best considered as a working alliance, which includes: the emotional bond between the client and counselor, the quality of the client and counselor involvement in the activities of counseling, and the degree of concordance between them on the goals of counseling. Although originally considered important only in the psychoanalytic literature, the concept of a working alliance is now seen as applicable to various therapeutic approaches and techniques (Gelso & Carter, 1985). Emphasized in this model are contributions of both the counselor and the client in an effective working relationship (Horvath & Symonds, 1991).

The research on the relationship between the working alliance and outcome has been generally favorable. Hartley and Strupp (1983) found that successful and unsuccessful cases could be differentiated on the basis of the strength of the working alliance in the first quarter of treatment. Others (Luborsky et al., 1988; Morgan, 1982), reported that early indications of the strength of the alliance predicted up to 33% of the variance in outcome. Similar results were reported when the notion of the working alliance was extended beyond analytic treatments. Horvath and Greenberg (1986) reported that as much as 30%–45% of the variance in counseling outcome was accounted for by the working alliance after only the second or third session. In a recent meta-analytic review, Horvath and Symonds (1991) found the working alliance to make a significant contribution to counseling outcome. In a review of over 100 studies, they reported that a conservative estimate of the strength of the working alliance is r=.26. While collaboration, mutuality, and engagement were important common elements, the diversity in measurements and conceptualization of the working alliance may have diminished the reported strength of the relationship with psychotherapeutic outcome (Horvath & Symonds, 1991).

A second model of the counseling relationship that also focuses on client-counselor interaction is the social influence approach (Strong, 1968). According to this model, the therapeutic relationship is an interaction between client and counselor in which the counselor develops a position of influential power by enhancing the characteristics of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, thus becoming a credible and useful resource to the client. The counselor then uses this position of interpersonal influence to assist the client in therapeutic changes (Strong, 1968; Strong & Claiborn, 1982). However, most of the research pertaining to the social influence model has addressed the conditions that may lead to the development of counselor social influence (Heppner & Claiborn, 1989).

LaCrossee (1980) found that perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness at the completion of counseling were strongly related to outcome and accounted for 35% of the variance in outcome as measured by goal attainment scaling. Others have found these counselor's variables to be related to changes in client self-concept (Dorn & Day, 1985) and general satisfaction with counseling (Heppner & Heesacker, 1983; McNeill, May, & Lee, 1987; Zamostny, Corrigan, & Eggert, 1981). Also, clients who perceived their counselors as being more expert, attractive, and trustworthy, as compared to those who viewed their counselors less favorably in these areas, were less likely to terminate prematurely (Kokotovi & Tracey, 1987; McNeill et al., 1987).

Heppner and Claiborn's (1989) major review of 60 studies on the social influence model indicated a variety of counselor verbal and nonverbal behaviors affected clients' perceptions of counselors. Analogue studies indicated the following: (1) nonverbal behaviors and prestigious cues affected perceived expertness; (2) counselor self-disclosure and self-involving statements influenced perceptions of attractiveness; and, (3) prestigious cues, congruity of roles, responsive nonverbal behaviors, positive self statements, and verbal and nonverbal cues all were significantly related to perceptions of counselor trustworthiness. These analogue studies also indicated that counselor use of profanity lowered ratings of attractiveness and that the level of intimacy in the counselor's touch was related to the level of perceived trustworthiness. Field studies indicated that factors that influence the counseling will vary depending on the stage of the counseling. Early in counseling, clients' rating of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness may be related to the helping role rather than any specific counselor behaviors (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; LaCrosse, 1980). On the other hand, positive client ratings of counselor characteristics at the end of counseling were related to specific counselor behaviors (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982). Heppner and Claiborn (1989) concluded that the interaction between the client and counselor is not static, and in order to understand the relationship it is important to consider events at distinct times or stages during the counseling that influence this interaction.

Summary and Implications

More than any other element, the counseling relationship is significantly related to positive client outcome (Luborsky et al., 1988). The counseling relationship is the foundation from which other counseling activities are built and the arena in which interpersonal interaction occurs. While certain counselor characteristics such as empathy are important, we now know that the counseling relationship is more than a set of facilitative conditions. Bordin's (1979) working alliance and Strong's (1968) social influence models broaden the definition of the therapeutic relationship and focus on the mutual interactive process between the client and counselor. Early outcome results have provided strong support for these two models of the relationship. Thus, both the working alliance and social influence models may provide important perspectives into understanding the active ingredients of a therapeutic counseling relationship.

Some of these research findings can also provide insight into the significant elements of reciprocal and interactive counseling relationships. Indications are that the relationship should be a personal one, where both client and counselor accept and affiliate with each other. Given the findings that the client's evaluation of the relationship is more strongly related to outcome than other measures, it appears counselors need to focus on the client's perceptions. Hence, for practitioners the focus should be upon the client's definition of a helpful and engaging relationship rather than on elements that have been typically defined by the field as "relationship skills."

To determine what the client perceives as helpful and engaging, initial client assessment may include active inquiry into the client history of other constructive interpersonal relationships. Similarly, in this process the client's expectations regarding the helping relationship should be determined. Social influence theory research would support the counselor using this initial assessment to enhance the client's perception of the counselor being trustworthy, attractive, and expert. The working alliance perspective would support using the client's beliefs to develop mutual goals and a sense of collaboration. In conclusion, these results suggest that the client's perspective of the relationship is crucial; however, this does not suggest that counselors should always act as clients wish.

The views and expectations of the client are not the only part of a reciprocal or mutual counseling relationship. Since this relationship depends on mutual feelings of respect and regard, counselors may need to attend to the personal attributes that contribute to their interactions with clients. While research reflected that the relationship should be personally involving for the counselor, it doesn't involve characteristics of other relationships (e.g., friendship). In fact, according to a social influence perspective, the power to influence the client is an essential ingredient in a therapeutic counseling relationship. Thus, counselors need to achieve a delicate balance between keeping the relationship professional, and yet, being personally involved with the client. In conclusion, the counseling relationship has been shown to a salient factor, yet it is not always easy to establish this critical alliance.

Counselor education has emphasized human relations skills training (Carkhuff, 1980; Ivey, 1971). As Krutz, Marshall, and Banspach (1985) suggest, no helping profession has been more deliberate than counseling in the development of helping skills training. However, as indicated in this review, the counseling relationship is more complex than simply the personal connection between client and counselor promoted by the helping skills movement. The counseling relationship is a mutual interactive process between the client and counselor rather than a simple demonstration of counselor skills. Based upon these findings, curricular attention should focus on relationship models supported by research (working alliance, social influence) and focus less on those skills that appear to be less effective (facilitative conditions). Martin (1990) argued that the field can now move beyond psychological skill training into a more comprehensive educational experience. The comprehensive educational experience suggested by Martin may be enhanced by focusing curricula on the elements of the interactional process between the client and counselor, rather than exclusively on the counselor's implementation of helping skills.

Counseling Session Factors

Within the context of counseling, the practitioner must make numerous organizational and logistical decisions that have the potential to influence counseling outcome. Session factors include, among many others, how long counseling will last, which modality to use, how many and how often to schedule sessions, and what fee to charge. Theoretical models differ on the importance attributed to these decisions. Do these session factors influence the outcome of counseling?

While some of these factors have been shown to significantly affect client outcome, the research indicated that some generally expected session factors make little difference. Three organizational aspects of the counseling session seemed to make little difference to the eventual outcome. Whether counseling occurred in group or individual settings (Schmidt, 1982), whether it occurred once a week as opposed to more or less frequent sessions, or whether the client paid a fee (Pope, Geller, & Wilkinson, 1975) did not significantly affect client change. The lack of an association between fee and outcome may be somewhat surprising. The purpose of much of the research into the influence of fee payment has been to investigate the role of client investment. It is becoming increasingly clear that monetary remuneration may be a poor indication of the more global concept of client investment.

The timing and procedures of the initial stages of counseling have also been investigated. In their recent review of the literature, Luborsky et al. (1988) found that a long wait between applying for and beginning counseling was negatively related to outcome. On a similar note, Peiser (1982) found that clients who missed one of their first four scheduled sessions are significantly more likely to have negative outcomes than those who kept those initial appointments. The manner in which the client and counselor initially structure their roles was also important. Outcome was enhanced when a more collaborative rather than authoritarian style was initiated (Cooley & Lajoy, 1980; Rudy, 1983). Similarly, clients who were prepared for their roles either prior to or as a part of the initial stages of counseling, had more positive outcomes than those who were not (Eisenberg, 1981; Friedlander, 1981). Clients with low initial prognosis seemed especially to benefit from being prepared for their role in the therapeutic process (Jacobs, Charles, Weinstein, & Mann, 1972).

Are more sessions better? A number of studies have focused on the relationship between the number of sessions and client outcome. Luborsky et al. (1988) found that the number of sessions was positively related to greater client improvement. On the other hand, Smith et al. (1980) identified a curvilinear relationship between the number of sessions and outcome. In one of the most complete reports, Howard, Kopta, Krause, and Orlinsky (1986) also found a curvilinear relationship in which 50% of the improvement occurred by the eighth session, 75% occurred by the end of 26 sessions (once a week therapy over 6 months), and 85% of improvement occurred by the end of the first year of weekly counseling.

Summary and Implications

On the basis of these findings it seems that certain organizational decisions made by practitioners regarding session factors do affect counseling outcome. For example, counseling should quickly follow initial contact by the client. The client's attendance and involvement in the first sessions appears to be critical, suggesting that counselors attempt to enhance those factors that may help facilitate early attendance. In addition, the manner in which counselors prepare clients for their role is also important to the final outcome. Furthermore, it does not seem to matter if clients are seen as individuals or in groups, which may be a particularly relevant finding to those counselors in settings that often use group approaches. Also, it may be useful to look at methods for encouraging client investment and realize that requiring clients to pay a nominal fee may not be the most effective way to encourage an investment in the counseling process.

Along this line, some practitioners may want to examine their conceptions concerning the time frames within which they expect client changes to occur. While there are certainly conditions, clients, or situations that require long-term counseling, on the average, the majority of client change occurs within the first 6 months of weekly counseling. Consequently, counselors should expect to be most influential and therapeutic in the early stages of counseling. Thus, it is incumbent on counselors to promptly initiate work rather than losing precious time in the early stages. Attending to important elements in the counseling relationship, such as social influence variables of expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness may also enhance the ability to impact a client early in counseling. Counselors must also be adept at identifying progress within counseling and at quickly rectifying the situation when the counseling process has stalled.

Specific Counseling Approaches and Techniques

Historically, a major concern in outcome research has been the attempt to identify which technique or model of counseling is most useful for which client and under which conditions (Paul, 1967). This question about which approach is "best" has spawned a number of comparative outcome studies (Luborsky, Singer, & Luborsky, 1975; Smith et al., 1980). To date, the outcome research has been unable to identify a more favorable relationship between any one of the over 130 different "schools" or specific counseling approaches and counseling outcome (Garfield & Bergin, 1986; Lambert, 1991; Smith et al., 1980). In comparing psychotherapeutic approaches, Luborsky et al. (1975) found that the various therapeutic approaches were equally effective and thus proclaimed, using the words of the Dodo bird in *Alice in Wonderland*, that "Everyone has won and all must have prizes." Stiles, Shapiro, and Elliott (1986) concluded that, based on a substantial body of evidence, one could reach the conclusion that the outcomes produced by different therapeutic approaches are equivalent. However, Kazdin (1986), suggested that these cumulative findings were at best mixed and difficult to assess. More recently, Beutler (1991) has suggested that conclusions of comparability contribute to the "uniformity myth" and thus confound the potentially useful process of prescriptive matching.

The questions regarding which approaches are most effective are both theoretically and methodologically complex (Stiles et al., 1986). For example, in regard to specifically targeted client problems such as phobic, anxiety, and skill deficit problems, numerous researchers have found that a small but consistent advantage exists for cognitive and behavioral methods over traditional verbal and relationship therapies (Dush et al., 1983; Lambert et al., 1986; Miller & Berman, 1983; Nicholson & Berman, 1983; Shapiro and Shapiro, 1982). Conversely, other studies have supported Luborsky et al. (1975) and found little advantage for behavioral over non-behavioral treatment methods (Klein, Zitrin, Woerner, & Ross, 1983; Stiles et al., 1986).

In one of the most recent and methodologically sound comparative studies, the National Institute of Mental Health collaborative research program studying the treatment of depression, no differences were found between cognitive behavior therapy and interpersonal counseling (Elkin et al., 1989). These conclusions compare favorably with those of a recent study that explored the differences between exploratory-insight-oriented (EIO) versus reality-adaptive-supportive (RAS) approaches in working with schizophrenic patients. In this study, Frank and Gunderson (1990) found that although patients in both groups made substantial improvements, there were no differences between the approaches in client outcomes. They noted that since the outcomes were not related to differences in approaches, they have refocused their attention on identifying the "common factors" that explain client change.

These results have produced an interesting paradox for the counseling practitioner. On the one hand, the empirical research has suggested that there is no difference between diverse therapeutic approaches. On the other hand, the process and content of various approaches appears to be dramatically different. A number of important issues require further consideration in order to understand this apparent paradox. First, it may be that differences among approaches *do* exist but are being missed due to research methodology problems (Kazdin, 1986; Stiles et al., 1986). For example, many times comparative studies use imprecise outcome measures and research designs (Kazdin, 1986; Stiles et al., 1986) or may treat clients, therapies and methods as interchangeable (Kiesler, 1966) thereby averaging any effect of treatment across heterogeneous clients, counselors and settings. Persons (1991) noted that contemporary outcome studies have not adequately measured the theories being compared in that they do not provide individualized assessment or treatment planning. Instead most studies standardize all approaches to clients, potentially obscuring differences between theoretical approaches. Similarly, the research concerning differences in theoretical approaches is often disseminated in research reviews, where there are other methodological problems that may obscure variations among the approaches. Box score and narrative methods, used in many of these reviews, may provide an imprecise comparison of the differences in this complex question. However, as suggested by Kazdin (1986), the issue of treatment comparability is very complex and cannot be easily dismissed by the call for improved research design.

A second explanation may be that there are *no* important differences among counseling approaches. Given this explanation, one could argue since counseling is effective, any degree of client change must be due to common processes shared by all approaches (Garfield & Bergin, 1986; Gelso & Carter, 1985; Goldfried, 1980; Highlen & Hill, 1984). While a "common factors" explanation has been previously proposed, to date the outcome literature has not specifically identified the germane core elements of counseling that influence outcome. In a promising move, researchers have begun to explore the interactive aspects, such as the therapeutic alliance between counselor and client (Gelso & Carter, 1985; Horvath & Greenberg, 1986) and the social influence model (Strong & Claiborn, 1982). This interactive focus may help explain specific elements of these common factors.

Specific Techniques that Result in Client Changes

Specific techniques used to elicit client changes have also been a common focus of outcome research. But do any of these common methods have a positive impact on counseling outcome? A number of frequently used techniques received either mixed or minimal empirical support. For example, exploratory statements by the counselor intended to clarify meanings or experiences were not found to be consistently related to positive outcome (Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). While Elliott, Baker, Caskey, and Pistrang (1982) found that giving advice was positively related to counselor-rated client outcome, most other reviews have found little support for giving advice and being directive (Mintz, Luborsky, & Auerbach, 1971). Orlinsky and Howard (1986) found that reflections or restatements to check the accuracy of the counselor's understanding of the client and/or to facilitate future self-explorations were neither beneficial nor detrimental. When clients were directed to attend and focus on their affective states, it was sometimes but not always helpful (Nichols, 1974). Little was accomplished when counselors used immediacy and focused clients on here-and-now events in counseling; furthermore, immediacy under conditions of low empathy and genuineness may even have been harmful (Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). Finally, counselor self-disclosure was only occasionally found to be helpful (Elliott et al., 1982; Hayward, 1974; Watkins, 1990).

Confrontation was often but not consistently found to be related to successful outcome (Greenberg & Rice, 1981). Directing and focusing the client's attention as a form of confrontation was sometimes important (Nichols, 1974); however, not all focusing was of equal importance. Orlinsky and Howard (1986) suggested that outcome was enhanced when counselors directed the conversation to the client's presenting problems. In fact, when clients focused more intently on problematic issues they did substantially better in counseling. The use of questions to explore aspects of the client's presenting concerns rather than to gather information was found to be frequently helpful (O'Malley, Suh, & Strupp, 1983). Finally, encouraging client's independence also seemed to be important (Luborsky et al., 1988).

While a variety of counseling techniques contribute to client change, the most important aspect of any counseling technique may be the skillfulness with which these interventions are used and implemented (Feifel & Eells, 1963; Nash, Hoehn-Saric, Batth, Stone, Imber, & Frank, 1965; Sachs, 1983). Sloane et al. (1975) suggested that the skillfulness of the counselor was important in more than 70% of the cases they reviewed, while Luborsky et al. (1988) found all reported studies strongly support the importance of skillfulness. Lambert (1989) suggested that the ability of the individual counselor can have a major impact on the process and outcome that exceeds the impact made by any technique and/or approach.

Summary and Implications

Which method or technique is best for which client and under what conditions? Kazdin (1986) suggested that while the intent of comparative outcome studies and major literature reviews has been to resolve the paradox and answer these questions, the results have produced unclear conclusions that may have fueled the controversy. While a number of claims have been made about the equivalence of approaches in counseling, these claims appear to be somewhat premature given the theoretical and methodological complexity of the issues surrounding comparative outcome studies and the current status of the empirical data.

However, to date, the research indicates that no one theoretical approach to counseling is any more effective than any other. Similarly, adherence to any one theory or approach does not guarantee successful outcome. However, these results do not necessarily indicate that theory is irrelevant. Cormier and Hackney (1987) suggested that a theory may be a useful conceptual tool in helping practitioners organize and direct their activities in a systematic fashion. Highlen and Hill (1984) interpreted these results to indicate that the field should work toward convergence and identification of elements that facilitate client change that are common to many psychotherapeutic approaches. Garfield & Bergin (1986), Frank (1974), and Sloane et al. (1975) have also proposed that the field concentrate on the "common factors" that are the underpinnings of therapeutic effectiveness. The role of theory on outcome will continue to be debated and with advances in methodological approaches a better understanding may emerge.

It is also difficult to evaluate the contribution of specific techniques outside the context of other elements within counseling, but research indicated that some specific techniques contribute to positive outcome. Most techniques that help clients focus on their presenting concern seem helpful. Certainly there is no "magic" in any technique, and in fact it may be the method and skill of the counselor using the intervention with the client that is most important. The choice of therapeutic technique depends on the quality of therapeutic relationship, the structure of the session, and the goals of the client. Each technique must be evaluated for the individual client and the support from the empirical literature.

Client Experiences

Clients are asked by counselors to engage in numerous experiences throughout the course of counseling. Sometimes they are asked to self disclose, sometimes to problem solve, or maybe to express their feelings or develop insight. Are these experiences and activities related to successful counseling?

Several common experiences clients undergo in counseling that have an impact on outcome have been empirically investigated. Active client involvement in counseling was found to be very important to positive client outcome. In particular, outcome seems to be enhanced when clients develop a problem-solving attitude (O'Malley et al., 1983; Luborsky et al., 1988) and become actively engaged in experiences that help them master problematic situations (Luborsky et al., 1988). Schauble and Pierce (1974) found that involvement is augmented when clients attribute their problems to themselves as opposed to outside events. The development and maintenance of client expectations for positive change in counseling were related to positive outcome (Luborsky et al., 1988). In addition, there seemed to be support for a trend indicating clients experiencing a greater range of emotions had more positive outcomes than those who experienced only a narrow range (Luborsky et al., 1988; Nixon, 1982). Finally, a process that encourages the clients to talk was related to positive client outcome (Sloane et al., 1975).

Three client experiences commonly assumed to play an important role in counseling were not supported by the empirical research. Neither client insight nor client self-exploration were related to successful outcome (Morgan et al., 1982). Similarly, the importance of client motivation received only mixed support and was strongest when measured from the counselor's perspective (Keithly, Samples, & Strupp, 1980; Prager, 1971).

On the surface, these results may seem difficult to understand given the present values and theoretical traditions of the counseling profession. However, these findings may make sense given a different view of the communication process in counseling. Consider, for example, the social influence model of counseling, which has generated interest in the impact of message variables on the client's counseling experience. In particular, Claiborn (1982) and others (Levy, 1963; Strong & Claiborn, 1982) suggested that, regardless of content, it is the discrepancy of the information provided by the counselor that results in client attitude change. While still tentative, these findings suggested that clients who receive information that is moderately discrepant from their own beliefs may be more likely to change their beliefs than those who experience either high or low discrepancies (Heppner & Claiborn, 1989; Strong & Claiborn, 1982). This discrepant information can be presented to the client using techniques such as counselor interpretation, reflection, or reframing. Thus, insight that does not provide any new and different information may not be helpful.

Summary and Implications

The experiences clients engage in during counseling do have an important impact on clients' success or failure in reaching their goals. Understanding which experiences are most helpful and in what manner they may facilitate change is complex. Presently, it appears that client experiences can be most productive when a skilled counselor facilitates client involvement and when the client develops a problem-solving attitude and engages in mastery behaviors related to germane situations. Furthermore, it seems counselors need to encourage clients to have a broad range of emotions and they need to promote an expectation of positive change.

One conclusion that can be gleaned from these data may be that practitioners and educators should reconsider the extent to which the experiences they promote in counseling are related to outcome. For example, client self-exploration and insight are often considered to be important steps for clients to take in the resolution of their concerns. Yet, studies have indicated that self-exploration and insight are not necessarily related to outcome unless specifically focused on the client's presenting problem. Luborsky et al. (1988) contended that it was astonishing that there was not more support for the concept of insight considering its emphasis in most approaches. In light of the research, it *is* perplexing that so much time is spent on insight and self-exploration when problem solving and mastery are more significantly related to successful outcome. For the practitioner, these findings would suggest that insight and exploration be purposefully related to understanding elements of the problem currently facing the client.

Implications and Applications

This chapter has provided an overview of current trends in counseling outcome research. The voluminous results of studies conducted to investigate counseling process strongly suggest that counseling can be effective in helping clients make positive changes. What is not so clear are those characteristics of counselor and client, aspects of the counseling relationship, session factors, or models and techniques that may contribute to counseling success. In fact, no single counselor or client characteristic or combination of client or counselor characteristics can account for successful outcome. No particular theoretical model or magical technique can independently ensure success. The quality of the relationship was consistently noted as a significant factor in outcome. However, the significance of other seemingly unrelated elements of the counseling process leads to the conclusion that successful outcome results from more than just a quality client/counselor relationship. One can only conclude that counseling is complex with multiple factors that combine to influence successful outcome.

The preponderance of outcome evidence also leads to the conclusion that counseling success is not at all guaranteed. In fact, as many as 10% of clients may actually get worse as the result of participating in counseling. While a number of factors contribute to negative results, the implications of these results support the contention that negative results often are related to the counselor. The conclusion: Some counselors are better at producing positive outcome than others. Along this line, Lambert (1989) argued that the individual counselor is a significant factor in outcome. Thus when counseling concludes with less than favorable results, it is the counselor who must take the responsibility to alter his or her approach and interventions. These findings support the position espoused by Haley (1976) that the counselor is responsible for the results of therapy. In addition, an unskillful counselor cannot be ignored by colleagues and supervisors because "no harm can be done."

The present status of the outcome research also leads to the conclusion that many questions regarding the specific elements that contribute to successful counseling are, as of yet, unanswered. In order to adequately answer these questions, theoretical and empirical inquiry into counseling efficacy should refocus. Instead of searching to find which approach is best, it may be most beneficial to investigate what is common among successful counselors regardless of their theory or model. In fact, it can be argued that a "common factors" model is presently supported by the counseling outcome literature. Lambert (1986) suggested that these common factors account for 30% of change while techniques may account for 15%, expectancy (placebo) effects another 15%, and spontaneous remission 40%. Unfortunately, what the research does not provide is a clear indication of those specific "common factors" that are shared by all successful counseling.

Along this line, it seems that a multidimensional model may be necessary to successfully account for the "common factors." Atheoretical factors, such as those comprising the model used to organize this review (see Figure 1), can be supported by the counseling outcome research and may provide an initial step toward understanding the nature of these "common factors." For example, characteristics shared by both clients and counselors influence the initiation of the counseling relationship. The type of relationship sets the foundation for various session factors. These session factors set the parameters for the conduct of counseling. Within those parameters, various techniques may help clients focus on their presenting concerns. As a result of these techniques and the relationship with the counselor, the client has certain experiences. Each of these different dimensions of the counseling process uniquely contributes to successful outcome. Future counseling outcome research should employ techniques that investigate the interconnections among these various elements, rather than viewing counseling as a series of unrelated factors.

Although controversial, the outcome research could prove very important in improving counseling practice. For example, Paul (1967) suggested that one of the primary goals of a counselor is to be able to discern which general strategies and specific techniques are appropriate for which client, under which circumstances. But what is the basis upon which those decisions are made? Unfortunately, there are indications that counselors are not exempt from negative or stereotypical attitudes toward females (Hill, 1975), males (Robertson & Fitzgerald, 1990), minorities (Wampold, Casas, & Atkinson, 1981), and the aged (Myers, 1988). In fact, many client and counselor characteristics commonly assumed to be important factors influencing effective counseling do not seem to be supported by the empirical literature. Holding true to beliefs without empirical support may inadvertently lead counselors to intervene with clients in ways that are not helpful. One of the great values of the outcome literature is that it has the potential to serve as a reliable basis for clarification of these beliefs.

Using the outcome literature as a foundation for training models could also provide the basis for important curricular changes. For example, one of the hallmarks of many counselor education programs is the counseling theory class. This class is often seen as providing models from which student counselors will operate with their clients. However, there seems to be little evidence that adhering to a theoretical model is related to client change. Counseling theories may assist counselors in organizing information about client problems and interventions (Cormier & Hackney, 1987) but do not substitute for an understanding of the elements of the counseling process and the ability to implement appropriate strategies to best meet the needs of clients. An empirically-based curriculum would more likely include course work and experiences that focus on the "common factors" of successful counseling. Counseling theory and counseling outcome research could actually go hand-in-hand. Knowledge of the outcome research could serve as the knowledge base from which future counselors become critical, informed consumers of counseling theory and technique.

The minimal impact of outcome research on practice and training is certainly interesting given the great wealth of available research studies. However, this situation is understandable when you consider that many counseling practitioners and counselor educators will find numerous results within these pages that do not match their personal beliefs about effective counseling. For example, that insight is not "curative" or that all approaches are equal may be difficult to accept. Unfortunately, these apparent discrepancies between research and practice often result in the dismissal of research findings as irrelevant. Indeed, numerous questions have been raised about the current counseling research methodologies (Kazdin, 1986; Persons, 1991; Lipsey, 1990). These methodological issues are beyond the limits of this presentation. However, even given these methodological questions, the outcome research findings cannot be dismissed as mere methodological error. More comprehensive methodologies, such as meta-analytic approaches and quality clinical trials, appear to increase design sensitivity (Lipsey, 1990) and thus improve measures of counseling effectiveness. In addition, the consistent trends that appear in quantitative and qualitative reviews and clinical trial studies only lend support for the value of outcome research as a source from which to evaluate our understanding and practice of counseling.

There is also an ethical dimension to the question of what basis to use to make decisions in counseling and training that is often overlooked. Counseling carries a substantial ethical responsibility to make the welfare of the client the highest priority. The ethical code of the American Counseling Association (AACD, 1988), as well as of other professional organizations, clearly states that practitioners should use the research to guide their practice (AAMFT, 1988; APA, 1989). Lambert (1991) has argued that a counselor cannot meet these ethical standards without a thorough knowledge of the empirical literature. The counseling outcome research continually provides significant information and counselors need to remain current concerning changes within their field allowing them to provide the best care for clients. Counselor training programs influence future counselors and, thus, have a similar professional and ethical responsibility to examine all the evidence when making curricular decisions. The outcome research can be an important aid to both practitioners and educators.

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Chapter 8

Important Considerations in Disseminating Counseling Outcomes Research

Garry R. Walz

Knowledge keeps no better than fish.
Alfred N. Whitehead

Introduction

In a real sense a focus on counseling outcomes should employ the dual perspective of both research data generator and research outcomes user. A focus on either one to the exclusion of the other may very likely fail to enhance counseling efficacy. A near exclusive focus on research design and statistical treatment can result in counseling outcome research studies that are rigorous but of only limited utility to those who profit most from their use. Conversely, an almost exclusive focus on the specific questions and interests of a user/practitioner while ignoring important design and analysis considerations can lead to research that targets important topics but probes the many dimensions of those topics poorly. For either practicing counselors who need valid and viable information for enhancing their counseling efficacy, or researchers who have a commitment to program research which has professional impact, both emphases are important.

Ten Principles of Counseling Outcome Research Results

In this chapter I have endeavored to articulate ten principles of counseling outcome research results which apply to both generators and users of research. I think of the principles as stimuli to further exploration by a reader on the ideas they present and the questions they raise. We believe that to think of counseling outcomes research as only a body of knowledge with little consideration of how and why it was generated and for whom it is intended, and how it can be most expeditiously disseminated to those who can benefit most from its use, is to settle for functional trivia rather than potency. Counseling efficacy and advocacy go hand in hand. Hopefully, these principles will help counselors to reflect and act upon both in a concurrent and congruent fashion.

1. All research reports should clearly specify in an initial statement who was involved in the framing of the objectives of the research and for whom the research is intended. Both practitioners and researchers who are now regularly engaged in the retrieval of research studies pertinent to their interests have an advantage, not accorded them some years ago, of being able to search the available body of literature by specifying that they are interested only in retrieving research studies and in some cases specifying the type of research about which they wish to retrieve information.

Thus, for retrieving information on subjects which may potentially yield enormous numbers of studies frequently numbering in the thousands, a person is able to winnow the number down to a useable quantity. We believe that this is an important principle for two major reasons. First, it greatly aids the person engaged in the search aspect of research, that is retrieving information relevant to his/her interest and thus avoiding needless screening and assessing of large numbers of essentially irrelevant studies. Second, it prods a given researcher and writer to be clear in his/her own mind as to the audience for whom the research is intended. Researchers cannot be all things to all counselors! The goals which fashion a research endeavor and the manner in which it is communicated are both instrumental in determining for whom it will be useful.

Therefore, it is very important that the researchers in reporting their results commit to being as clear and specific as they can be in specifying the audiences for whom they believe the information is relevant and, wherever possible, the type of information which will be presented and the questions it will address.

In a recent publication authored by the editor, each chapter was introduced by clearly designating the outcomes or learning a user could expect to gain from reading that chapter. This provided upfront information to users about what to expect and allowed them to judge for themselves whether the chapter offered them what they were looking for. This feature proved to be very well received and won plaudits from users exasperated at having to spend a great deal of time determining what was covered in different publications.

2. In sharing and reporting the results of their outcome investigations, researchers need to keep in mind the existence and characteristics of the wide variety of dissemination choices which now exist. In sharing and writing about an investigation, counselors wishing to communicate their outcomes have many advantages over what was available even a decade or two ago. Clearly, multiple dissemination options exist serving different purposes and clienteles. No single dissemination channel is likely to serve all clienteles and all purposes equally well, although some clearly achieve this goal better than others.

Professional journals rank highest in terms of their professional status and, for many, points earned towards promotion and merit increases. However, studies of scientific communication suggest that the readership and the use of any given article in a professional journal is low and the audience is very likely to consist of other professional peers and colleagues. Even so-called practitioner journals only reach a small percentage of practitioners in a given professional specialty. These practitioner journals simply provide information rather than offering any direct assistance in the acquisition and use of knowledge for the improvement of counseling practices.

Perhaps the strategy which maximizes one's ability to reach and impact different audiences quickly is to adopt the approach of preparing a report to be submitted to ERIC for possible input into *Resources in Education* (RIE). This report then becomes available to anyone—either in hard copy or on microfiche—who undertakes a search of the ERIC database using a user-friendly electronic means such as ERIC on CD-

ROM which anyone can learn easily and quickly. For those for whom ERIC on CD-ROM in unavailable, a manual search using the printed ERIC indexes is also possible! Since length is a relatively minor consideration in the acceptance or rejection of an ERIC document, and the turn-around time between the receipt of an ERIC document by an ERIC Clearinghouse (ERIC/CAPS) is usually 6 months or less, one may communicate with interested audiences in a far quicker and more complete fashion by using ERIC rather than through any other commonly available means. And, because the use of ERIC is so broad, both within this country and around the world, a researcher is able to alert peers with similar interests, as well as individuals of differing interests, of the nature of one's work. This provides an opportunity for follow-up communication and networking with a diverse audience.

The second step in this approach is to use the ERIC document and the responses to it as the basis for developing more refined and targeted journal articles which speak to specific audiences and are presented in a more stylized fashion in accordance with the interests and profile of a specific journal.

This approach of first thinking purposefully about who may profit from a specific piece of research, then insuring that the dissemination mode selected is consistent with the audience(s) a person wishes to reach, is a prerequisite to reaching all persons who can profit from and use the research.

An important question is the extent to which it may be possible to develop a generic form of communication that speaks to the interest of the lay person as well as that of the professional specialist. One of the more interesting examples may be that of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, which because it focuses on topics of great current interest (e.g., the effects of aspirin on heart attacks and the use of alcohol on personal longevity) has resulted in regular media coverage of studies reported in the journal. Interestingly, some doctors now regularly have the journal available in their waiting rooms so patients can explore articles and areas of interest to them while they wait. This, then, is an example of how material can be presented in a way that responds to people with both a highly technical as well as a general interest in a topic. It has been suggested that we lack any such means of communication within counseling or even education. Perhaps the most generic source in education is *Phi Delta Kappan* which in many respects is the most used or generally accepted voice in the broad context of education. A new journal, *The American Counselor*, published by ACA, has the potential for becoming a publication that covers issues and topics of interest to a wider public. This could lead to the reporting of important counseling outcomes research in the public media to the real benefit of the counseling community.

An excellent source for the dissemination of ideas, either about major professional issues or specific research or theoretical topics, is the use of the *ERIC Digest.* A single page, two-sided report of about 1500 words, the *Digest* is a carefully targeted information analysis product which in a very succinct and authoritative manner provides the reader with highly relevant and up-to-date information on a given topic. Particularly with the advent and proliferation of electronic communication, all counselors may wish to consider the use of the digest format for providing information to different publics in a format that conserves both the writer's as well as the user's time and energy.

3. Front-end framing which reflects significant stakeholder interests is an essential element of outcome-focused research. It is not unusual for counselors to discuss whether or not they can use the results of a particular study. Typically, the discussion is somewhat tortuous because the "real questions" that different persons in the group have are not considered or spoken to in the research report.

It is clear that the partiality of many major funding bodies is to earmark their funds for research and development by professional development institutes. In these institutes the focus and agenda building is determined by a mix of educational specialists with particular attention given to the needs of those who may potentially benefit from the research. Being sure that those whom you wish to use your results have early opportunities to share their needs and interests is to provide a greater assurance that there is more return for the "buck" than if questions of application do not occur until after the research has been completed. The clear principle here is that stakeholders, with particular reference to those for whom there is an expectation that they will use the results, should have significant input in the early discussion and design stage of research endeavors. It is possible, even probable, that if we were to involve practicing counselors more in research on client outcomes that we would obtain information which could be used by counselors to enhance the role they play in the counseling process and thereby extend counseling efficacy.

There are key phrases for specialists in many fields that represent the wisdom of experience. Thus, in real estate it is said that what is important in the purchase of property is "location, location, and location." Perhaps the admonition for counseling outcomes investigations should be "client front-end framing!"

4. The dissemination of results and findings growing out of counseling outcome investigations should be in a format appropriate for the intended end user. From a purely self-interested standpoint, a researcher should have as a major objective, "How can I communicate with my intended audiences in a way that will maximize the ease with which they understand and apply the results of my work." Operating from this perspective, the researcher is likely to maximize the benefits of his/her own efforts and to reap the rewards and satisfactions of having been influential and helpful to others. To approach the reporting of counseling outcome results in this fashion calls for imagination and flexibility. Our continued interactions with practitioners has led us to believe that the "what works" focus is a primary concern and interest of hard-pressed practitioners. They are on a never-ending quest for information about programs and practices with the clear potential to bring about significant improvements over existing programs and practices. Clear guidelines for how these practices may be adopted and implemented are pure gold for a hard-pressed practitioner. It also has been found that "peer reporting" on the use of a particular innovation (or the use of case studies and anecdotal descriptions of someone's use of a new procedure or practice) is a meaningful and interesting way to present research outcome findings. One need not labor the point that paragraphs of esoteric narrative are not nearly as interesting or useful to someone whose greatest need is for applications—rather than for writings—which focus on a specific effort to bring about an improvement in a counseling program or practice. How a new practice works and what has been learned from the efforts of others about applying and using counseling outcome results are important concerns to counseling researchers.

The format which has been adopted by ERIC/CAPS and has proven to be useful is that presented in the Crème de la Crème counseling series. In a Crème de la Crème book, the writer first of all provides a solid rationale and conceptual base for his/her counseling approach. This is then followed by a series of discussions by users in different locations and settings about: (1) what they did, (2) the nature of the setting in which they did it, (3) the way in which they introduced the innovation, (4) the outcome that resulted, (5) what they learned from the experience, and (6) what they recommend to others thinking about adopting their innovative program.

Persons using the Crème de la Crème monographs have reported that the multiple descriptions of applications and use prove particularly rewarding because a reader can pull from the different descriptions relevant and motivating comments and ideas. This gives the readers the opportunity to develop their own syntheses and to decide how they can integrate the experiences of a number of users in a way that is applicable to their own setting. This also provides a sense of "ownership" of the innovation. This ownership leads also to a greater motivation to see the innovations succeed: Stakeholders will devote their energies to implementing the innovations because they represent their own thinking and energy as well as the thinking and energy of the originator of the innovations.

5. Counseling efficacy research should include studies which provide confirmation of counseling programs and practices as well as exploratory studies which probe the efficacy of new, untried counseling interventions. A time honored and highly creditable form of research in both the physical and behavioral sciences is confirmatory research (or the non-confirmation) of existing theories and beliefs. A one-time finding of the relationship between dynamic variables with a narrow unrepresentative population sample, e.g., college sophomores, is hardly cause for jubilation or a belief that the connection has been demonstrated. The one-time validation leading to an assumption that it has become a principle of counseling may not only be in error in itself (a statistical or research artifact not demonstrable in further studies) but can lead to a chain of fallacious research based on the assumption that the original connection or outcome was validly demonstrated when in fact it cannot be replicated in subsequent studies.

Undoubtedly there is less glamour or excitement associated with confirmatory research. In most cases one is not investigating an exotic or exciting new idea. Rather, one is looking into whether the questions posed by exploratory research have substance and validity. It is, we believe, a highly worthy pastime and one that needs greater recognition and emphasis as an important research endeavor. It would seem that courses in research for counselors could well involve projects where students as a team have as their goal the replication of a major counseling outcome (or a crucial aspect of that outcome) as an early lesson in research design. This approach would not only help them to understand the modus operandi for confirmatory research and replication, but would help them to develop an attitude that emphasizes the need for replication before an outcome is accepted or acted upon.

6. We need more attention to and discussion of the ethics and problems associated with secondary analysis. Among doctoral students there is a great press to find a topic for their dissertation, gather their data, and get on with analysis and writing. The advantages of using data from a completed study—frequently of proportions far greater than erstwhile doctoral candidates would accomplish with their own resources—are highly attractive. A quick entry into data analysis, the prestige of being associated with a major study, albeit after the fact, and a kind of insurance that their work will be sans major obstacles or disruptions, makes secondary analysis an attractive research design. Attractive indeed if the goal is to do a creditable research job and get on to the transition from student to faculty or professional practitioner. Nor is the appeal confined to doctoral students. Certainly, many faculty members are attracted to research opportunities in secondary analysis where start-up demands are minimized.

As attractive as secondary analysis can be to students and faculty members alike, we are struck by how little discussion has been devoted to the topic. We believe two major types of issues need to be discussed. First, is the question of whether this piggyback research provides an adequate opportunity for fledgling researchers to learn the challenges and demands of initiating research. Secondary analysis is frequently neat and clean but is it adequate preparation for undertaking initiatory research? A review of sample doctoral dissertations suggests that the secondary analysis route is indeed highly attractive to doctoral students. But are they possibly losing out on the opportunity to acquire effective research skills by being efficient in conducting their doctoral research? A second question, ethical rather than procedural in nature, concerns who deserves "first billing" or how to assign the credit for the research. Does credit for all subsequent research on a major research project legitimately belong to the original researchers and is hence citable by them? How much credit is to be given to the secondary researchers? We believe questions like these are deserving of more attention and discussion if we are to more adequately explicate the use of counseling outcomes research.

7. A relatively undiscussed question is "Where is counseling research initiated?" and "Who are the initiators?" Answers to these questions play a very important role in determining the utility as well as the use of counseling outcome research. These questions may be the ones to ask: "What is the nature of the research enterprise in counseling?" "Who does this research and where are they located?" The answers to these questions may lead to understanding the characteristics of the counseling research being generated. It has been noted by those who do comparative studies of education and educational research that, in contrast to educational research in many foreign countries (e.g., Denmark and Holland) where practitioners are virtually involved in all phases of educational research, it is the American practice for researchers to be university or research center staff for whom research is a major, if not their only, priority. Practitioners are frequently involved only at the very end when they are presented with the research findings. An alternative model is one where researchers and practitioners rotate roles and variously participate in both research and the delivery of services. As suggested, this has become a more common model for European educational research.

Basic to this whole discussion is how research results are best assimilated and used. The superordinate/subordinate model perceives end users, e.g., practicing counselors and teachers, as persons who are given research results so they may use them to improve their practices. Essentially, under this model researchers fill empty vessels. The researcher decides what is is important to research and after completing the research decides what to use and how to disseminate the results. Under the alternative approach to dissemination, the stakeholders are partners in their search process from the initial framing of the questions to be researched to interaction on and consensus decision making about what the research results means, how they can be used and to whom and in what form they should be disseminated. Many professional educational development institutes and programs are located in intermediate school districts and associated with a university but not controlled or directed by university staff. Rather than fill an empty vessel, this approach more fittingly could be described as consensual decision making about what vessel to use and what to put in it.

The bottom-line question for counseling is how counseling research is viewed by those who most stand to benefit from it. Are the potential consumers and users of counseling research both attracted to it and effective users of it? If we cannot answer yes to the aforementioned questions then it would seem we do need a new model for the conduct and dissemination of counseling outcome research.

8. We need attention to the process by which a counselor confronts new knowledge and makes appropriate changes in his/her beliefs and behavior. As researchers it would often seem that for many the final act in the research process is the writing of the journal article describing his/her research. The attitude could well be that "the information is there for anyone who wants it." While this may be the approach of an individual researcher, it hardly seems an acceptable stance for someone who is a professional counselor to take. The continuing personal and professional renewal of each counselor is the concern of all of us for we are judged as a profession as much by the behavior of the worst as by the behavior of the best of us.

As Jon Carlson noted in his quote from Chapter 6, the greatest challenge we face may be whether we have results that have the potential to significantly change counseling for the better, results which counselors will accept and then use to change their counseling behavior if it has become contrary to their current beliefs and actions. Do we selectively accept and use counseling research to buttress what we do and ignore that which challenges our present practices? To what purpose do we do research other than for personal ego gratification if it is without the potency to promote counselor change?

We believe how research is framed and the involvement of stakeholders in critical decision points in the research and dissemination process will clearly influence how they respond to and use research results. But there is a step beyond that. It relates to the commitment each individual counselor has to her/his professional growth and renewal. We expect that commitment may well be built during the initial counselor education preparation. If a counselor is imbued with the joy of discovery and as an integral part of her/his learning is assisted in assimilating and acting on new information, even when it challenges long-held beliefs garnered from earlier course work and experience, the likelihood of movement or change occurring is enhanced.

In addition to creating a climate conducive to change, two special features are important. First, is helping each new counselor to see the importance of establishing for him or herself a system for personal and professional renewal. Current certification programs, with their built-in support for continuing education, are helpful in this respect. Additionally, it is important that each person be prepared to assimilate and use information from a variety of information sources, e.g., journals, databases, specialized searches, and workshops and conferences. The important part here is having a systematic plan. There is a vast difference in outcome and level of learning between a person who just goes to a conference because it is the thing to do and a person who attends a conference seeking answers to specific questions and has thought through who she/he wishes to connect with while at the conference. The former person leaves to chance whether and how the conference will impact upon him/her. The latter person knows what he/she wants to learn and has a plan for achieving it. The second feature of the renewing professional is an active networking that provides regular input from professional peers who function as a reliable source of interchange on important professional topics. New research results and considerations as to how the research can be used are particularly apt topics for interchange in the network. A stimulating new feature is the introduction of computer networking and conferencing where persons without respect to geography and time can be active participants in discussions of implications and applications of a new piece of research.

9. We need to be sensitive to the importance of the use of research methodologies and instrumentation that are appropriate for use with minorities. A major theme throughout this volume has been the importance of stakeholder involvement in the research process. In principle number 3 we emphasized the importance of "front-end framing which reflects significant stakeholder needs and interests..." This seems to us a cardinal principle of research if it is to be effectively disseminated and used to bring about meaningful change. It assumes special importance when the stakeholders are respectful of particular cultural, racial or gender groups. Without adequate representation subgroups can seriously challenge the relevance of the research outcomes. In recent discussions we have heard persons speaking from a feminist perspective seriously question the outcomes of many counseling studies because the design was "rigidly experimental" which they viewed as insensitive to gender differences. In their view, a qualitative design would have been more responsive to gender differences and led to different results.

It is beyond the focus of this article to probe the merits of different research designs. However, from a dissemination and utilization standpoint there is a clear need for the viewpoints of any significant subpopulation to be acknowledged and represented in the design phase so that when the outcomes are disseminated the discussion is focused on how the outcomes can be utilized by different subgroups rather than incite needless haggling over the validity and utility of the results. Self-interest should clearly motivate researchers to be cognizant of the possible/probable responses of significant subpopulations to the research design and instrumentation phases of counseling outcomes research. By properly attending to subgroup's concerns in the front-end framing, an outcome researcher enhances the probabilities that her/his research will be disseminated and that it will lead to meaningful change. And what else do we (or should we) do outcome research for other than to promote change?

An interesting side note is a concern rightfully raised by Watkins and Schneider (1991) about the proliferation of outcome measures, many of them unstandardized. They suggest that "like counseling itself, counseling-outcome measurement sometimes appears to be in a state of chaos." (p. 71). From the period 1983-1989 they counted 1430 outcomes measures in their review (840 of them being different ones). Obviously not a desirable state. It does seem that some attention to stakeholder interests in the front-end framing would lead to a greater degree of consensual approval about the suitability of different measures in responding to important subgroup characteristics. Given a known "approval rating" for different subgroup appropriateness for different instruments, this could lead to a greater use and continued refinement of such instruments rather than continuing the professionally unsound practice of the development of new, essentially unvalidated instrumentation for each new study.

10. We need to use dissemination modes for reporting outcome research findings that are more broadly responsive to the needs and interests of all users. For most of us in our professional lives our reading time shrinks while our reading list grows. We keep hoping for a few "rainy days" where we can get to the piles of reading materials we have set aside for later. My recall of the studies on scientific communication conducted in the 1960s is that few persons in most professions read any particular article within a year of its publication. Though I lack information of more recent vintage, I believe that the earlier conclusions are still justified today. Though counseling was not investigated per se, I expect that it is no different than other professional groups in the relatively low level of readership of the journal literature proportional to the membership of the total professional group. Most authors we expect have had the underwhelming experience of pouring their heart and soul into a piece of writing and expectantly awaiting an avalanche of responses which never materialize (newsletter articles may be a happy exception to this phenomenon, an outcome which we will revisit shortly).

If the lack of readership of our best journal articles, not to mention the lack of assimilation of their ideas, is a valid observation of current practice, a compelling question for any researcher, particularly outcome researchers (who implicitly—if not explicitly—are concerned with the improvement of practice) is what vehicle(s) can be used to better communicate with the populations who need and can use valid research outcome findings? The question may be even more daunting than it first appears to be when one considers that, though ostensibly researchers are concerned with change and the improvement of practice, we can conclude from how they respond to the challenge that other variables such as the academic reward system are important considerations in where and how research results are reported. Such behavior should not be the source of blame. Probably most, if not all, of us are interested in peer judgments of our merits and promotability and only the most sophisticated faculty "merit and promotion" committees seek methods other than peer testimonials to assess the value and utility of a given person's research and writing.

We believe, however, that increased attention and emphasis should be given to using new forms of disseminating research outcomes that more fully respond to the needs of today's counselors.

Use of Meta-Analyses-Type Syntheses to Digest Large Bodies of Research Findings

There are probably many more persons who would like to regularly read research articles in relevant journals than there are those who can find the time to do so. The meta-analyses type of review can periodically jumpstart a person's interest in and knowledge about a topic of importance to his/her counseling behavior. I use the term meta-analysis-type syntheses to designate a body of dissemination formats from which an author can select the format most appropriate to the research content and the intended audience. For some situations a formal, traditional meta-analysis is a best choice while in other situations a revised synthesis format is preferable. Many useful examples exist of traditional meta-analyses and research reviews of the AERA type of *Annual Review of Research*. We believe a recent article in *Counselor Education and Supervision* by Sexton and Wiston (1991) is an excellent example of a synthesis type of article which is a model of effective dissemination to a defined user population. In a relatively short space it reviews and synthesizes the empirical literature on three components of counseling, succinctly summarizes the relevant findings regarding each of these components, and concludes with a statement of the implications of their synthesis for the research on training and supervision. The conclusion includes both a highlighting of the judgments of others as well as the authors' own interpretive comments regarding training needs and priorities. For a short expenditure of time, readers responding to this format can upgrade their knowledge about important counseling topics; identify specific studies to pursue in detail; and review a series of compelling and challenging conclusions to compare with their own thinking. Most importantly, it stimulates further thinking (and action!) rather than stifling it.

The electronic revolution is promoting changes in professional communication which may go unnoticed by authors/researchers (and which may handicap them in effectively communicating in an electronic age). Two very important characteristics are (1) the need for data compression and (2) the explicit statement of findings and conclusions. Time is of the essence in electronic communication, hence lengthy documents (full text) are a rare exception and there is a continuing press to shorten and synthesize large documents into short, succinct ones. Users of electronic data systems also are typically operating from a sense of urgency and have a strongly felt need for rapid retrieval of important findings and author conclusions.

There is, in fact, a third characteristic: An insatiable thirst for hot versus cold data—research findings that are relevant because the time lag between when the data were gathered, and when it becomes available was small enough so that the data could be generalized to larger populations. A common lag of 2 to 3 years between when the data are collected and a report is written and published, and an end user is able to obtain it, may preclude the data having real utility in a world where events change so rapidly. The need, therefore, is clearly for dissemination formats that respond to at least the three specified criteria: (1) data compression, (2) explicit statement of findings, and (3) minimized reporting time lag.

Digests and Abstracts

Digests

Probably the most currently sought after and extensively used dissemination mode is the digest. They are responsive to the three previously identified criteria desirable for effective dissemination. Though varying in particulars, depending upon the sponsoring agency, digests have become increasingly attractive because of their relative ease of electronic communication and highly positive user response. The most comprehensive system for producing digests, and probably most extensively used digests, are those developed by the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Designed to provide a synthesis of a relatively large body of information in a single, double-sided page (1200 words), digests have earned the reputation for offering authoritative information and analyses on critical topics in education in a timely manner. Their popularity has been enhanced because they are available on-line—ERIC Digest on-line EDO—and are accessible through Internet or GTE. The ease of access and their public domain status has led to literally thousands of them being copied and distributed both in the US and abroad. ERIC/CAPS has developed two spinoffs of the digest system by offering a desktop compendium of digests relevant to counseling drawn from the digest collections of all ERIC Clearinghouses and placed in an easy-to-use volume of 168 digests entitled *CounselorQuest*. To offer information on fast-breaking educational developments which occur between volumes of *CounselorQuest*, a *CounselorQuest Update Pack* has been introduced which includes digests that are literally only days old. Future innovations include the availability of packets which provide indepth coverage of a single topic (e.g., all digests in the system on career development). The low cost, popular acceptance, and varied uses to which they can be put, have led digests to become "best sellers" in information dissemination programs.

Abstracts

Embodying some of the same attractive features as digests, abstracts have become an indispensable tool in the retrieval of information from large data bases. Typically, abstracts in *Resources in Education* (RIE) run 200 words or less. They have proven to be extremely useful in aiding a user in deciding whether to retrieve a particular document or not. Also, reviewing all of the abstracts on a particular topic provides a quick, but remarkably cogent review of the major findings in the larger overall literature on a given topic. Though not as extensive, similar information advantages are offered by the shorter abstracts provided by *Psychological Abstracts* and *Cumulative Index to Journal Education*

(CIJE). Analysis of abstracts by frequency and type of topical coverage also provides useful trends and time analyses. As described earlier, a person who systematically reviews the abstracts of a given topic, e. g., school achievement studies, can keep him/herself on the leading edge of new information on topics of high personal interest, thus enriching the teaching and research capabilities of the person.

Summary

The central messages in this chapter can be subsumed under main points. First, the importance of front-end framing or the inclusion of the intended users of the research outcomes in the planning of the research, particularly with regard to the questions to be answered. Second, the need to tailor the dissemination mode to the users to insure a better fit between the informational content and a form which is conducive to the use of it by a counselor to bring about change. Third, the desirability of authors employing multiple dissemination modes more in tune with the electronic age (such as digests). Fourth, and perhaps most important of all, thinking of dissemination as an interactive process between the researcher and the user with each contributing significantly to the process.

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Chapter 9

A Summing Up

Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer

Propositions Regarding Counselor Efficacy

It is possible, even probable, that as you read the preceding chapters you were generating in your own mind thoughts about what contributes to counselor efficacy. If you are like us, the visual path you developed is a diversified one—"well trodden" in places based on previous personal practices, in others only a visual image, and a belief based on your reading that a particular practice would be the way to go. We believe that is a desirable outcome—reinforcement of some current behaviors and a compelling vision of what can be done to enhance counselor efficacy.

In this chapter, we offer a personal summing up of potent factors in counselor efficacy. Some of these factors are ones we have believed in for many years—others were formed as a result of our reading and writing the previous chapters. What we believe is of major importance is the stimulus value that the writing has to facilitate examination of personal belief systems and professional practices. Increased motivation to examine one's counseling beliefs and practices may be the really significant long term outcome from reading (and hopefully reflecting on) the contents of this volume.

It has been said that one experiences the really momentous events in life alone. No matter how close a person may be to another, the actual experience of a life event, fleeting or prolonged, is experienced singularly—by oneself. How we experience and relate to any given event is unique. We believe that many of the factors discussed in this volume have meaning to all counselors but are mediated through their personal belief systems and life experiences. We believe this personal mediation makes the development of counseling axioms contraindicated. Rather, we see each person making her/his own set of efficacy propositions as a means to harness and target personal energy. The result is a dynamic and life long personal and professional renewal, focused upon enhancing a person's (a counselor's) efficacy.

Though we believe each person experiences significant life events essentially alone, we also are of the view that discourse on personal and professional beliefs is rewarding. Whether confirmatory or challenging, it serves to strengthen and/or broaden and change personal beliefs. We therefore offer these propositions as a stimulus to others in undertaking a rigorous and spirited analysis of counselor efficacy—their own and that which applies more broadly to the profession.

Proposition 1—**Counseling does make a difference.**

Though the exact effects of counseling vary with the person and problem, the evidence is both so strong and so consistent across problem and client types that a given counselor can operate with the belief that her/his efforts will make a difference. We believe that this research knowledge buttresses a counselor's personal beliefs based on his/her own experiences. We believe having a firm conviction that counseling is a powerful tool for positive change in human behavior is important. It reinforces the belief of counselors in the efficacy of their efforts. Thus, they are likely to perform with greater confidence and believe more strongly in the worth of what they do.

We sense many counselors act in a defensive, even apologetic manner, especially in dealing with the public at large. The data-based substantiation provided in this volume should spur counselors on to further develop the efficacy of their counseling. In particular, it will support conceptual and practical excursions into new counseling domains that counselors less sure of their efficacy would shy away from. Here we are thinking of a need for greater responsiveness to multiculturalism and abuse, as well as to new tools such as computer-assisted counseling.

Proposition 2—**Counselor efficacy can be enhanced through regular dialogue with peers regarding significant counseling developments using electronic networking.**

We believe that counseling beliefs are a product of: 1) a counselor's counseling experiences, 2) what they read, and 3) what they learn about counseling from interaction with knowledgeable peers (whose beliefs are strongly influenced by 1 & 2). Numerous counselors have shared with us that since leaving their counselor education programs they have had few real opportunities to discuss, either in depth, or over an extended period of time, questions about or views regarding counseling. This opportunity to discuss significant counseling topics with peers is one of the things they miss most about their days training to become counselors. It also is one of the aspects of conferences and conventions which they appreciate most—discussing their counseling experiences with peers. The discussions that go on while "conventioneering," however, frequently focus as much or more on topics of governance and broad professional issues as they do specific counseling topics.

Recent years have witnessed enormous advances in the quality and availability of computer networking. Internet in particular, a supernetwork of computer networks, is a means for rapid communication between people. As many as 10 million people may now be served by Internet around the world. The technological capability is also available through special networks for computer conferencing. It would seem that the possibilities for highly useful and rewarding communication for counselors now readily exists. Such communication is now a regular part of the professional lives of many educational groups (e.g., librarians, college professors) and individual counselors. Special counselor computer conferences and networks dedicated to counseling topics and composed of participants with common interests offer great promise to counselors. Topics might include best practices in career counseling, new counseling interventions which have worked, or counseling research outcomes with relevance for career counselors, college counseling center counselors, and counselor educators. These conferences and networking opportunities would both speed the dissemination of new ideas and research results and encourage interaction between participants.

Participation in such electronic conferences involving a regular bi-weekly discussion offers much in broadening and strengthening a counselor's efficacy. In this case, since Internet and comparable networks are so relatively inexpensive, the will to do it seems more important than the wherewithal to support it.

Proposition 3—**The systematic acquisition and utilization of research results must become a mainstay in the professional counseling behavior of counselor educators and counselors.**

An area that gives us pause in reflecting on counselor efficacy is the entire research enterprise as it relates to counseling. There are many apparent disparities. Counseling is seen as important yet knowledge of counseling research is limited. Many counselors apparently ignore information which conflicts with their prevailing views. Overall, many counselors suggest research results do not play a very important role in the development of their counseling approaches. While there are undoubtedly many explanations for this state of mind, we would suggest one explanation is certainly the low level of emphasis given to the *acquisition* and *utilization* of research results.

It is likely that relatively few persons will conduct research studies, but all counselors can and should be involved in incorporating new research results into their thinking and their behavior. Perhaps we need to give greater attention during in-service educational activities for counselors to how to incorporate new ideas into existing belief systems. Particularly helpful would be a consumer approach to research results where counselors were helped to consider how research results should be examined and to attend to how a research finding would be translated into particular emphases and behaviors on the part of a counselor. Most important of all is the need to place greater emphasis on change in counseling behavior being data driven rather than something that happens by whim or fancy

Proposition 4—**Research User Participation in the Framing of Research Designs and Programs Will Lead to Greater Appreciation and Use of Counseling Research.**

The low repute in which counseling research is held by many counselors has been a concern of many of the writers in this volume. On the one hand we have a growing body of research results which validate the counseling enterprise and assist in differentiating between desirable and less desirable counseling practices. A clear plus for counseling. On the other hand, we have large numbers of counselors (larger by far than the first group) who regard counseling research as essentially worthless.

They see few, if any, applications of the research to the problems and issues which they face.

Admittedly, the problem is a difficult one and not easily resolved. It is long standing and represents differences in priorities and perspectives. It would seem, however, that a greater use of research driven change in counseling could be accomplished by giving persons who are the intended users and beneficiaries of the research the opportunity to design and contribute to the research. For many counselors counseling research is seen as "worthless" because it doesn't attend to the needs and interests of counseling practitioners. Broader participation in the framing of research will likely result in a greater use of the results—a highly desired outcome of the research.

Proposition 5— **A "Common Factors" Approach to What Makes for Successful Counseling Offers Considerable Promise for Promoting Enhanced Counselor Efficacy.**

We believe the discussion by Sexton in Chapter 7 of the common factors across different successful approaches to counseling would do much to develop a higher level integration of counseling approaches that would greatly benefit both counseling practitioners and researchers. It is a functional way of skimming the cream from a large number of approaches, none of which has been able to demonstrate any clear superiority over the others, but each of which has something to contribute to a new, more pervasive and inclusive paradigm of effective counseling interventions. It has the further advantage of providing the opportunity for contributions to be drawn from diverse sources. By broadening the base of experience from which the basic tenets are drawn, the probability of its applicability to a wider range of counseling clients and situations is increased. We believe this endeavor would be a useful one in bringing together and synthesizing the *best* of our counseling research and practice results. It would further create a paradigm for counseling interventions that counselors would find more useful and one that would be inclusive of their own personal experiences and thinking. Far better to operate from this inclusive and synthesizing approach than to carry on in "horse racing" fashion pitting one approach against another to determine the "winner."

Proposition 6—**The capacity to understand multiculturalism, to see the strength in diversity, and to possess the desire and the ability to create community are essential variables in counselor efficacy.**

At whatever level a counselor is at or in what particular situation they function as a counselor, their understanding of the changing milieu in which they function is critical to their effectiveness. Counselors need to be able to understand the importance of the effect of racial/ethnic background on a person's socialization while also recognizing the individuality and uniqueness of each person. Of great importance is that counselors, both in attitude and behavior, communicate their belief in the strength that diversity and pluralism bring to an organization. The counselor must not play a passive role, but rather an active one of building community where people lower their defenses and rejoice in the differences among people. Counselors are in a unique position to see the pervasive negative effects of a lack of community where the "in" culture are viewed as inferior. The counselor's ethical and professional obligation is to assist each client to cope with the culture as they experience it. But they also have an unusual opportunity to assist the community in liberating itself from dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors which impact on individuals in ways that deprive them of their right to be different and to be seen by themselves and others as worthy persons.

Conclusion

Our review and analysis has led us to believe that counselor efficacy is a worthy topic of consideration for all counselors—irrespective of their position and perspective. It is a process of sifting and sorting from all the data—both experiential and empirical—that which fits a particular counselor from that which does not. Counselor efficacy has both external and internal referents—the knowledge a counselor acts upon must be shown to be worthy (external), and each counselor must realize that it has meaning and utility for him/herself (internal). Counseling efficacy will have different definitions for different counselors.

We hope, however, that the ideas discussed herein will become a road not less, but more frequently, travelled that leads to enhanced counselor effectiveness and personal satisfaction.

Appendix A

ERIC/CAPS

Educational Resources Information Center—ERIC

ERIC is a decentralized nationwide information system founded in 1966 and currently sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement within the U.S. Department of Education. It is the largest education related database in the world. ERIC is designed to collect educational documents and journal articles and to make them readily available through a number of products and services: the ERIC database, abstract journals, microfiche collections, online and CD-ROM computer searches, document reproductions, and information analysis publications. The ERIC audience is equally wide-ranging and includes teachers, counselors, administrators, supervisors, policy makers, librarians, media specialists, researchers, students, parents, and other educators and interested persons.

Counseling and Personnel Services Clearinghouse—CAPS

CAPS is one of the 16 subject-oriented clearinghouses of the ERIC system. CAPS' exceptionally broad coverage includes K–12 counseling and guidance, post-secondary and adult counseling services, and human resource development in business, industry and government. Topics addressed by CAPS are many and varied and include: preparation, practice and supervision of counseling professionals; career planning and development; marriage and family counseling; and services to special populations (substance abusers, students at-risk).

Appendix B

CAPS Publications Descriptions

Crème de la Crème Series:

Empowering Young Black Males by Courtland C. Lee

Focuses on the empowerment model Dr. Lee has developed for assisting young Black males in acquiring skills which will enable them to cope effectively. Includes four training modules and useful resources. *95 pp.*

Learning Styles Counseling by Shirley A. Griggs

Prepares counselors K–12 to diagnose and infuse learning style approaches into their counseling. Useful in consulting with teachers on accommodating learning styles in the classroom. *161 pp.*

The Teacher Advisor Program: An Innovative Approach to School Guidance by Robert D. Myrick and Linda S. Myrick

Describes six teacher advisor programs that creatively meet the developmental needs of middle and high school students. Many practical ideas and approaches. *125 pp.*

Invitational Learning for Counseling and Development by William W. Purkey and John J. Schmidt

Explains how integrating the principles of invitational learning into guidance was a positive force for change in seven schools. An excellent approach for responding to students at risk and minimizing dropouts. *138 pp.*

Comprehensive Guidance Programs that Work by Norman C. Gysbers

Describes successful comprehensive guidance programs in eight school settings in six states. Includes practical suggestions for bringing about change in K–12 school guidance programs to make them truly comprehensive. *171 pp.*

School Counseling Series (ASCA and ERIC/CAPS):

Toward the Transformation of Secondary School Counseling by Doris Rhea Coy, Claire Cole, Wayne C. Huey and Susan Jones Sears, Editors

This compilation of original articles and the best from counseling journals provides a discussion of key concerns, issues and trends in secondary school counseling. Developmental guidance programs, teenage fathers, computer competency, the counselor's role in enhancing the school climate, and using career information with dropouts and at-risk students are some of the topics included in the eight chapters and 35 articles. *393 pp.*

The Challenge of Counseling in Middle Schools by Edwin R. Gerler, Jr., Canary C. Hogan and Kathleen O'Rourke, Editors

A compilation of articles from journals and ERIC, as well as one original article, on topics of importance to middle school counselors. *386 pp.*

Elementary School Counseling in a Changing World by Edwin R. Gerler, Jr., Joseph C. Ciechalski and Larry E. Parker, Editors

This book is a collection of the best articles published in counseling journals during the 1980s as well as original articles, providing elementary specialists with an abundance of eye-opening, innovative approaches and useful information as they seek the surest methods for guiding young students. *398 pp.*

Other Exciting CAPS Publications:

Family Counseling and Therapy by Robert L. Smith and Patricia Stevens-Smith

Provides an interesting and incisive overview of marriage and family counseling. Six chapters provide extensive coverage of: Healthy Family Functioning; Marriage and Family Counseling Theories; the Practice of Marriage and Family Counseling; Training Marriage and Family Counselors/Therapists; Issues and Topics in Family Therapy; and The Future—Images and Projections. An exceptional blend of previously printed and original articles by an array of eminent authors. Includes a stimulating introduction by Samuel Gladding. An excellent classroom text or resource for counselor updating. *446 pp.*

CounselorQuest Compiled by Garry R. Walz

CounselorQuest is unique among publications in the amount of practical and reliable information it offers counselors on a wide variety of topics of critical importance to them. Over 165 succinct and highly readable digests and three indexes (title, topic, and educational level). Each digest offers a comprehensive overview of a topic, provides useful practice and program suggestions, and tells you where to go for more information. An indispensable counseling tool that will save you from hours of searching for the information you need. Reproducible for use in classes, counseling interviews, and group meetings, too! *350 pp.*

Counseling Underachievers by Jeanne C. Bleuer

Summarizes achievement theories, shedding new light on the interaction between ability and effort. Presents a comprehensive model for counseling interventions. Includes guidelines for identifying the factors involved in student underachievement, and practical materials and ideas for improving study skills. *92 pp.*

Helping Children Cope With Fears and Stress by Edward H. Robinson, Joseph C. Rotter, Mary Ann Fey, and Kenneth R. Vogel

A concise overview of children's fears and stress. Features 47 activities and strategies for individual and group counseling interventions or for easy integration into the K–12 curriculum. Includes a facilitator's guide for training teachers and counselors on how to help children cope with fears and stress. *178 pp.*

Developing Support Groups for Students: Helping Students Cope With Stress by Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer, Editors

This volume includes six information-packed modules offering clear instructions on how to utilize the proven power of student support groups to assist students in developing well-balanced and emotionally stable personalities. Modules include: Helping Students Cope With Fears and Crises; Programs and Practices: Developing and Offering Student Self-Help Support Groups: Designing and Implementing Student Support Programs; Abstracts of Significant Resources; Sources for Assistance and Consultation. *202 pp.*

Student Self-Esteem: A Vital Element of School Success by Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer, Editors

A comprehensive and highly useful resource on K–12 student self-esteem and staff development for counselors, educators, and teachers. Sixteen chapters provide over 60 articles written by outstanding authorities on self-esteem, offering practical and field-validated program and practice ideas. *510 pp.* (Jointly developed by ERIC/CAPS and ASCA)

Counseling Young Students at Risk by Jeanne C. Bleuer and Penny A. Schreiber, Editors

Examines family and environmental pressures which make school success very difficult for many of today's young students. Includes an extensive array of suggestions and resources on: latchkey children; children of divorce; children of alcoholic or abusive parents; stress management for children; helping children cope with death and loss; and the relationship between children's self-esteem and their performance in school. *150 pp.*

Counseling Futures by Garry R. Walz, Editor

Features revised and expanded papers prepared by George Gazda, Bruce Shertzer, and Garry Walz presented at the Chi Sigma Iota Symposium on the Future of Counseling. Offers a series of exciting and stimulating perspective on the future of counseling. *86 pp.*

Empowerment for Later Life by Jane E. Myers

Examines the effects of aging on self-esteem and empowerment and reviews developmental issues key to understanding the aging process. Offers a "holistic wellness model" for empowering older persons. *118 pp.*

Few questions are as uppermost in the thinking of counselors as what contributes to counseling and counselor efficacy. Does counseling make a difference? What counseling approaches are the most effective, the least? What can be said about counseling efficacy in different specialties such as school, career, and marriage and family counseling? Is there a one best approach to counseling? These and many other compelling issues and questions are addressed in this unique book. Eight eminent writers and counseling leaders have reviewed the literature and prepared cogent analyses. Included in each chapter is a thorough review of the literature as well as thoughtful and highly useful recommendations. Launched as an ERIC/CAPS and ACES project, this has grown to become a volume filled with insights and ideas that are useful to counseling practitioners as well as counseling educators. Among the exciting chapters are:

- *Counselor Efficacy* Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer
- *Career Development* Rich Feller
- *Counselor Education* Robert L. Gibson
- *School Counseling* Nancy S. Perry
- *Student Development in Higher Education* Cynthia S. Johnson
- *Marriage and Family Counseling* Jon Carlson
- *A Review of the Counseling Outcome Research* Tom Sexton
- *Important Considerations in Disseminating Counseling Outcome Research* Garry R. Walz
- *A Summing Up* Garry R. Walz and Jeanne C. Bleuer

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